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CAPTIVE OF FEZ:

A POEM, IN FIVE CANTOS.

BY THOMAS AIRD.

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD, EDINBURGH:

AND T. CADELL, LONDON.

MDCCCXXX.

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EDINBURGH: PRINTED BY J. JOHNSTONE.

TO
JOHN WILSON, Esq.
PROFESSOR OF MORAL PHILOSOPHY IN THE
UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH,
THIS VOLUME
IS INSCRIBED,
WITH EVERY SENTIMENT OF RESPECT
AND ADMIRATION,
BY
THOMAS AIRD.

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THE
CAPTIVE OF FEZ.

CANTO I.

God help young Julian in his lonely chains,
Doomed to a dungeon, heir of prison pains !
But why degraded to this fettered shame,
Whose birth and bearing were the pledge of fame ?

Born of a king, from childhood's earliest day
He seemed for glory formed and manly sway.
What though the high brown tablet of his brow,
And cheek, the blood of Araby avow,

Yet beauty sate thereon ; and o'er his face
Young Hopes and Ardours ran their spangled race ;
And stately was his shape. Nor were belied,
By soul within, his form and look of pride.
A musing child, high thoughts by him were nursed ;
And early passions from his boyhood burst.
O ! trembling then, he named each glorious name,
And learned th' ennobling heraldry of fame ;
Wept tears of worship ; thought how glad were they
Whose names on the bright scrolls do shine for aye.
Fast grew the heaving impulse ; craving joy
And awe profound came o'er th' impassioned boy,
Heroic spasms of souls that fiercely long
To be on high, mid Fame's immortal throng.
So shall he be. Nor, earlier, shall he miss
The living praise that waits on youth like this.
So full of lofty gentleness and truth,
The wise shall point, the old shall bless his youth ;
Pure Friendship shall be his, Love's holiest hour,
And Beauty lightening from her latticed bower.

Thus, in his father's court of Portugal,
Grew Julian, honoured and beloved of all ;
And drew heroic temper from the fire
Of knights that thronged around his warlike sire,
And Beauty's praise, and from the bards that told,
Sung to the harp, the deeds of Christians bold,
When o'er the East, the holy flag unfurled
Led on the shining spirits of the world.

Then 'gan the youth, with premature delight,
Against the haughty infidel to fight ;
For, onward menacing, the sultry host
Of Fez, came swarming o'er the Afric coast,
Led by Zemberbo, who, like warrior-god,
His thunder-lights of conquest flashed abroad.
And well young Julian smote the Paynim horde,
And won the garland for his virgin sword ;
Till captive made, and by Zemberbo sent,
To court of Abusade in Fez he went,

A special prisoner : with unwonted care,
Zemberbo bade be light his bondage there ;
His honour pledged that thence he should not flee,
Within the royal walls he else was free.

So shall he be, in spirit and in truth,
And uncreate this bondage of his youth ;
For comes delicious sorcery, the while,
Of love, that might eternal chains beguile.
Fool ! count not thus : Life can but evils give
To Passion's children that intensely live ;
For theirs the daring and presumptuous heart
To trade with dangers in their lofty mart.
O ! there are they, quick souls, of pride to draw
But from themselves their bright presumptuous law,
Whom not the voice of Prudence can reprove,
Have set their hearts upon a perilous love—
Not wisely for themselves—to gain the name
Of madmen, glorying in their splendid shame.

So Julian loves, nor counts if he shall gain
A bliss unmeasured, or a boundless pain ;
He knows—he feels but this, that not to give
His heart to Geraldine were not to live.

Behold this daughter of a Moorish king ;
Yet say, how lovely in her life's young spring !
So well has Nature lit along her face
The blood that beautifies her mother's race,—
An English captive, woe, to Abusade
Her lord the Fezzan monarch, bore the maid.
O ! Geraldine, thy looks are dark as death !
Fair as the moon of heaven thy brow beneath !
What shall be done for thee, young Geraldine !
On golden manna and celestial wine,
The food of angels, wert thou fed, to win
That clear embalming glow thy cheek within ?
Nay, wert thou sprung from the Sun's shining loins,
Child of all beauty, that all love enjoys ?

In lightest play, in arch sweet railery,
Outglanced the swift young arrows of her eye,
To need a thousand pardons, and to win,
For fast relapses of their beauteous sin.
Yet did that eye, when aught was heard to grieve,
Gleam softly lightening as the star of eve ;
Nor less, o'er villain wrongs, could flash bold ire ;
Could burn with holy and indignant fire.

Thus shone, from earliest years, the royal maid ;
Not all subdued to wisdom, grave and staid,
Even by her mother's love, and tender claim,
Who, sweetly serious, wished her child the same.
Yet not the less that daughter, as she bore
Sweet English name, in England's virtuous lore
Joyed : And with joy her mother taught her well,
Like England's noble women to excel,
To hold the holy Jesus far above
The Arab Prophet, and his faith to love.

O ! soon rewarded in her honoured child,
That mother felt her dying fears beguiled,
As bowed young Geraldine, and kissed her eyes,
And fondly swore, when she was in the skies,
To guard her sisters young, and Ismael,
Her infant brother, and to love them well.
And from that hour she gave her lighter years
For deep inheritance of mother's fears,
For them to live, for them to love her vow,
Task her young heart, and wear no sunny brow.
O ! from that hour of covenanted love
At once she rose all quick-willed moods above ;
At once, her light and playful girlhood gone,
For them a grave and deep-souled woman shone ;
Whilst, high accordant to her heart's new power,
Her stature seemed dilated in an hour.
And taught by her, the things of Christ enlarge
The pure young spirits of her precious charge.
For to his dying Queen was given the vow
Of Abusade, that he should this allow.

Nor less respecting Geraldine's pure soul,
To her he left to teach them and control.
Even though, of elder sons by war bereft,
Alone to him was little Ismael left;
Yet, for that promise, and from this respect,
In Christian nurture was the boy unchecked.

Nor by the Fezzan court unfelt had been
The English manners of its honoured Queen,
That jealous law to soften, which enthalls
There, woman, banished in her lonely halls.
Hence oft young Julian saw and felt the power
Of maid whose beauty was a costly dower,
Whose soul was stainless as the heavens above;
And loved, and gloried in his boundless love.
How shall he see her move? his joy advance?
Thus Fortune helped him—and he blessed the chance:
Her brother sick,—his healing skill he told,
(Then oft th' accomplishment of warriors bold;)

And, heard and honoured by the Moorish faith
In Christian art, he saved the boy from death,
And won for this the loftiest recompense,
To see young Geraldine without offence,
Who watched the child; and won her gentle sigh
In thrall inglorious that his youth should lie.

And idlesse fed his love. And now the day
In rustling gardens o'er him shines away;
From morning hour to the blue listless noon,
And on to rising of the summer moon
Yellow and melting, through their cool retreats
Sauntering he walks, and loves their shady seats.
Now seemed man's life to his enlarged content
A new economy magnificent.
O'er its great notes what deep self-communings!
O'er fame, high triumphs, and all glorious things!
And new horizons widened in his mind,
And o'er them loomed his spirit unconfined:

For something splendid—vast—indefinite
He looked, he longed with vague aspiring might.

Ah ! soon throughout his dreams heroic stole
Love's undefined and melancholy soul.
And fears distinct, in quick reaction brought,
Renewed the evils of his captive lot,
Declared his hopeless passion, sternly named
The lofty purposes his heart had framed,
All vain, for Geraldine, who ne'er could see
His manly bearing, nor sweet judge could be.

Joy ! nor his love is vain ! One summer night,
In garden tent, he waked from slumber light,
And found an emblem-flower upon his breast,
Which bade him fear not, but still hope the best ;
Saw Geraldine soft glide through distant bower,
And joyed to guess that she had given that flower.
Still more, with hope he loved,—since to his lay,
Which mourned his home, remembered far away,

His maid's soft mandoline from palace high
The song renewed, and gave him sigh for sigh;
Till changed it rose into an airier strain,
His fears to chide, and raise his hopes again.

But where the promise of the song,—for now
To dungeon chains and darkness he must bow?
So wills Zenone, now the Fezzan Queen,
Whose heart from love to vengeance turn'd has been.

Fair was this Empress as the morning's eye
That lights her native climes of Italy.
Her garb, magnificent beyond the pride
Of queens, her regal nature testified;
Though still its hue unchanged of spotless white,
Belied her spirit not of purest light.
Yet did her heart, though proud, abhor her state,
And hate her monarch with unmeasur'd hate.
Scarce could she love him who, with wine engross'd,
Sought not in her his pleasure or his boast:

Yea more, she knew he loved his former wife,
Whose beauteous offspring chid her childless life.
Yet still from earlier cause her heart was stored
With vengeful hate: she scorned him and abhorred.

Now wonder not that, in an idle court,
Where jealous rules still hinder free resort,—
Where woman's heart, repress'd, of silly toys
Must idols make, and try to think them joys,
Zenone's soul, so wild, so passionate,
So ill-solaced, that she could only hate
Where she was wife, should glory in the thrill
Of love for Julian, counting not the ill.
She saw—at once she loved him; rash and bold,
Yet with a woman's tears, her passion told;
Deliverance promised; waived her mighty pride,
And sought to flee with him, and be his bride.

How from his pure and firm refusal burned
The Syren's heart to equal anger turned!

With bold and sudden seizure he was thrown
In dungeon fetters ; nor the doom was known
Save by the king, who yielded prompt consent
To this, Zenone's instant argument :
“ What though Zemberbo's arms have failed to take
Shore-ruling Centa, still have we a stake :
This honoured captive shall remain in chains ;
Nay, be the trading price of equal gains,
Shall gyves endure, shall death, unless be sold
For him this Centa, which his kindred hold.
Meanwhile our court his fetters must not learn,
So shall we shun to reuse Zemberbo stern.”

T' extend her vengeance in his farther ill,
Or still of love her purpose to fulfil,
That he to her, whom he had met with scorn,
All humbly yet might be constrained to turn,
Th' instructed jailer, as the captive asked,
Told thus his youth by Geraldine was tasked,

Who, in his sufferings, sought t' appease the pride
Of jealous prince, who claimed her for his bride.
Nor less, Zenone bade the youth be told
His sire refused to ransom him with gold.

II.

And is it so? He fought against his chains,
Till, all his being fused in fiery pains,
'Twas left him but to tug with blind endeavour
Through the red thralldom of delirious fever,
Where strength and all the noble attributes
Of youth, are but disease's wildest shoots,
And the full soul expressed of manhood high
Is only fiercer than the mummary
Of palsied age, its laughter and lament,
Is but a dotage more magnificent.

No hand was there to wipe his forehead damp,
No care, no love, to trim life's fainting lamp ;

Yet, won by Nature's aid, from bed of pain,
With heart subdued and soft, he rose again ;—
Yet soon, how soon ! in intermittent change,
To wing his spirit in its fiercer range,
With scorn and ire, and purposed vengeance strong :
O ! shame shall cover them who did him wrong !—
Again to glory in the stern relief
Of deeper pride o'ermastering his grief,
Which warred on hope, and bade all softness cease,
And strove for indignation's lofty peace ;—
But yet again to feel his heart subdued,
With love's soft thoughts of Geraldine renewed ;—
Again, again, to know th' alternate pride
Of spirit roused, or sternly self-denied ;
Till fast from each revulsion grew the mood
Of heart, now doomed upon its woes to brood,
To deem all glory gone, all hope a lie,
All life itself one dull infirmity :
And Heaven was nought ; and to his spirit's tone
Even God seemed weary on his boundless throne.

III.

God help the captive Julian !—now has run
The yearly circuit since he saw the sun.
And but, from softening of his jailer's will,
This little freedom qualifies his ill,—
That from his low mid cell, with nightly change,
One hour his steps should have a wider range
In airier room with latticed bars, that so
Heaven's breath on his young head might freshly
blow.

'Tis now th' enlarged hour,—with weary pain
Throughout the cell the captive drags his chain.
“ O ! ne'er for me green palm or laurel crown ! ”
Thus burst his saddened heart, “ nor high renown !
Like arrow spent in some far wilderness,
Ne'er to be found, my life has been a miss !
There is a thought to heave this heart indeed,
Like the pained boundings of the warrior's steed

That bleeds from battle to the deserts far,—
A thought—a plague—a death-compelling war
Declare ye men—not ye that soundly sleep,
And ne'er have turned to weep with those that
weep—

But ye that fevered rise at midnight hour,
Care's populous noon, o'er whom Despair has power,
How hard, how spirit-quelling more than all,
That she, so loved!—that she should urge this
thrall!

That friends so loved!—that he, my sire, should
hold

My light of life beneath base drudging gold,
Should leave these damps to rot my youthful limb!—
Down! swelling heart—thou would'st have died for
him!

Thrice would I give my life-blood, tear by tear,
Thrice would I die the death which mortals fear;

If chains might cease—might fall, like clouds
asunder

Riven by the flaming wedges of the thunder,
One hour, that I might run—might kneel—might
know,

My own—my Geraldine ne'er willed it so,
Nor wills it so."

But list! through the still night
Comes mandoline with touches soft and light,
Heard through his grated wall--That strain! 'tis she!
Reeling he turned—O! now he would be free!
He bowed to hear, for well he knew that lay;
Nor years could blot it from his heart away,
Since, breathed by him in twilight's deep-felt hour,
Young Geraldine had learned its thrilling power,
Since oft, at shut of day, entranced he stood
To list afar that song by her renewed.

It ceased: he started,—O! the bars are high;
But love is winged—is mighty—and will try:

Like the rock-beating ibex, bold and far
He springs upon the wall—he holds the bar.
He sees her stand,—the moon reveals her face :—
“ Whom seek’st thou, lady, in this shameful place?”

“ And is it thou ? and is it thou indeed ?
For such as thee are dungeons dark decreed ?
Thou good young prince ! ’Fore Heaven, they dare
to shame
The grace of life—the glory of man’s name
Who keep thee fettered thus. Young captive, tell
What must be done to sooth thy lonely cell ?”

“ Only to sooth ! why not to ope—to burst ?
Let me like wild Cain wander if accurst !
Why, give me all—yet little—but the pride,
Th’ untamed prerogative myself to guide,
Like th’ aweless pard who roams where’er he wills,
And finds his lair upon the unshorn hills ?

What shall be done?—Pure Heavens! shall man
believe

She comes in mockery to see me grieve?—

Why, I might wish these idle days were by;

Again might wish to see the glorious sky

Wide shining o'er the world; th' old solemn Night

With all her stars and silver moon of light;

The lifting-up of Day, when Night has ceased,

High on the golden mountains of the East;

And Noon: All these; the Seasons in their range,

That come and go with sweet dividual change,—

Storm-flaws, and Winter's thunderings when he

Has made his loud winds blow upon the sea,

And Spring, and Summer's glorious flush, that ripens

To costly Autumn with his golden pipes,

Still haunt my heart. Yet life—all hope—all power

Are undesired; yea death be mine this hour,

If thou—by Heaven this doom I dare not name!—

If thou—why here are darkness, fetters, blame,

And fear, and ire, and I an outcast weed,—
And all by thee, most lovely fiend, decreed !
Why seek'st thou then these darksome lattices ?”

“ I come—what shall I say to bid thee peace ?
O ! I will swear”—

“ Ha ! Geraldine, away !
Some spies are near thy honour to betray.
O ! for one hour unchained to guard thee hence !
Through yonder trees I saw a figure glance.
Away ! steal softly—save thee—heed not me.”

“ God in yon Heavens shall surely set thee free,
Thou generous youth, whom wrongs can torture not
Even her to hurt whom thou thy foe hast thought !”

“ Ha ! yet again ! a shadowy form again !”

“ 'Tis Axuch—let me save thee generous pain—

Shall he advance?—my honoured, faithful slave,
Who yet shall me assist thy youth to save.
Or foes, if near,—why let them do despite
And wrong me much before thy injured sight ;
As I did wrong thee, deeming, till to-day,
Thy honour sullied, thou from Fez away :
Yet was I told 'twas so—It ne'er was so ;
Nor stained thy honour, spotless as the snow.
Now, now—for I must go—it yet remains
To make thee think I wished thee ne'er in chains.
O ! teach me how to speak—to prove that I
Ne'er wished, ne'er doomed thee thus abased to lie !
'Tis but a day since hint of thy dark lot
By faithful slave was won, and to me brought.
Thy prison guessed, 'twas mine that lay to try,
To probe these depths of dull captivity,
To reach thy ear, thy spirit's hope recall
Of one who sought thee to redeem from thrall."

“ Accursed be my thought, that dared t’ assume
Thy pure young heart could wish me such a doom—
Though thus ’twas told me ! Now, by spotless
truth,

And thine the glory of ingenuous youth,
Sweet one thou never didst ! Angel of peace !
For this my heart’s indignant worm shall cease.”

“ Yet shall I plead,—can I indeed forget
Young Ismael saved ? My sire shall own the debt.
Nay, ere thou perish, shall Zemberbo know
Himself dishonoured in thy dungeon wo,
That he may save thee ; though I dread to bring,
With plea of insult armed, against our king,
His heart”—

“ Swift as the lightning would he take
Vengeance, and thou mightst perish for my sake !
Too much already hast thou dared for me !
O ! go ; yet in thy sweet thoughts let me be.”

“ By day and night, young captive, eve and morn,
I'll think of thee—while these sad chains are
borne.”

“ Away ! no farther wish of mine shall tempt
Thy spirit, glorying ne'er to be exempt
From plans, from perils, for my worthless sake,—
To bid me hope, yea more, these bonds to break.
Now thou must go, indeed. Yet, ere thou go,
Would that my father loved me thou couldst shew !
Him, lady, have I honoured passing well ;
Yet here unransomed has he let me dwell,
Has weighed my life against a little gold,
And found it lack, has let these chains grow old !”

“ Forgive me, knight, that I have dared to press
My own acquittal as thy best redress,
And my slight promises. But now be told,
Thy father fast would ransom thee with gold.

If terms he shuns, at least those terms are high,
Since costly Ceuta must from bondage buy.
Yet ev'n with this he'd ransom thee from chains,
But for his kingdom's safety, which restrains :—
So have I learned. And now beware the Queen,
For she th' abettor of thy doom has been."

" This—this is to be free ; and I am free !
My star of good, young princess, shines in thee.
Yon moon in heaven, how many hearts have bless'd,
As on she calmly journeys to the west !
She lights the white ships o'er untravelled seas,
She soothes the little birds upon the trees,
And cheers the creatures of the solitudes,
And leads the lover through the glimmering woods,
And gives to weary hearts unworldly calm,
When slumber comes not with its priceless balm :
But not yon moon in heaven, without a stain,
To watchful sailors o'er the trackless main,

To little birds, to desert-beasts of night,
To lover hasting by her glimpsing light,
To hearts oppressed, is as thou art to me—
So passing dear—whose fair young brow I see !
Ave Maria ! bless this lovely one,
Mother of Heaven ! and Thou, her gracious Son !”

Now fails his arm—his lovely vision’s o’er ;
Ne’er seemed the cell so dark and cold before
Which now receives him. Rallying, he tried
Anew the bars ; but fainting strength denied.
Yet, recompensed, he heard that tender lay,
Still, still for him, as soft it died away.
And hope, came back, and peace, and joy with these,
And cleared his spirit from its cheerless leas.

IV.

’Tis midnight ; there’s a vision in his cell,
And Julian starts from slumber’s broken spell,

Up from his straw-couch starting. Who is she
Before him, white and beautiful to see ?
Sultana she, a Queen, in life's mid prime ;
Yet all unworn, or lightly touched by time.
O ! there are they, like Egypt's gorgeous Queen,
By years unspoilt, 'midst passions changeless seen,
Grand harlot-witches, wild, magnificent,
Whose glory for a plague 'midst men is sent,
Cups of delicious hell, that princes drain,
Springs of red war, and kingdoms' beauteous bane !
The white Zenone—is she one of those ?
Lo ! cloudless, stainless, still her aspect glows ;
Still soft her eye with fires of dewy sheen,
Glassed in her cheek, life's youngest hues are seen.
Though subtle pangs, electric passions oft
Throughout her frame, so delicate and soft,
Have wildly streamed, their beauty-wasting curse
Has furrowed not, has only seemed to nurse
With dew her aspect : of life's finest clay,
She seems immortal and above decay.

Before her Julian stood composed and high,
And asked her purpose with a searching eye.
Now shall it be declared ? O ! woman's heart
How weak in love, how proud a thing thou art !
His eye she brooked not, but her own must hide
With cumbered eyelid, like a saffron bride.

Then traversed she the cell, as if to draw
From flashing speed her quick collected law.
Then stood like bloodless statue ; and afar
Her eye looked on, as if to distant star,
As if her aim lay far beyond this cell,
Till curbed, her glance upon the captive fell :—
“ My precious captive ! ha ! art thou grown old ?
So wise, so wary, and thy look so cold !
Now pr'ythee be not dull, whose eye should be
Lit with the stains of fire, and bold and free
As eagle's launched from off his craggy throne,
Who takes the wide clear firmament alone,
High through the morn ;—O ! nor his flight is done

Till he has held communion with the sun !
Forgive me, knight, I've deemed thee such a one.
Yet would I hold thee with my silken string,
And back, how oft ! from loftiest traverse bring.
O ! thou dull boy, deservest not to die—
My simple parable is it too high ?”

“ Nay, wife of Abusade, my heart's but slow
To deem thy faith, thy dignity thus low.”

“ Be mute !—thou comely wretch, thou shalt not
dare—

Ha ! wilt thou name him—touch me to despair ?
He lives—thou knowest not—but he should be
dead,
Who led me up through blood unto his bed.
But thou shalt die not, beautiful and brave !
For I have sought thee, and from death will save :
And thou wilt love me, and be all mine own ;
And I shall find for thee a lofty throne.”

**“ Thou gorgeous Queen ! magnificent may be
Thy scheme of life, yet is it not for me :
Mine humbler far, as far exempt from bliss,
I yet must bew me to a doom like this.”**

**“ But said I not ?—Or shall I kneel and swear ?—
Be up thy spirit from its dull despair !
My plan is framed :—A little ship for thee,
With white sails set upon the curly sea !
Heaven’s winds ! her snowy pinions how they
strain !**

**And who but I to lead thee o’er the main ?
My spirit bent to have some palmy isle
Where thou shalt reign, and I thy Queen the while ?
There shall my knowledge rare thy valour aid,
And double homage shall to thee be paid.
O’er the blue waves each morn canoes shall bring,
From isles around, rich presents for their king :
Peacocks, bright shells, and sweetbread from the tree,
From painted tribes thy morning gifts shall be.**

Now like my scheme : Now deem me"——

“ Truly one

As Circe fair, the daughter of the Sun,
Magnificent :—But then thy mighty pride
To simpler lord may make thee dangerous bride ;
And then—why then bold aims may soon estrange
Thy heart, a sister to that child of change,
Nightly that walks in fickle glory by,
The Moon, the white Sultana of the sky,
That monthly”——

“ Yet is there a fiery Sun

In yon same heavens, whose course is never done :
By him I'll swear”——

“ Lady thy hope is vain ;

My love's another's, and must aye remain.
And late methinks art thou to name release,
Who hast not deigned to bid this bondage cease
Long months ago : For, Queen, be thou assured,
To please thy will this doom has been endured.”

At these hard words, his high resolved mien,
How flashed the startled beauty of the Queen !
From their blue wrathful zones outbursting fly,
Keen shot, the showery lightnings of her eye.
Flamed brow, cheek, neck with crimson life ; and
fast
Electric shivers through her body passed.

Still to the impulse gleams, in lovely storm,
Throughout the lighted cell her hurrying form ;
Till, checked at once, she stands concentrated,
And majesty upholds her angry head ;
Calm now, and clear, the light her eye which fills,
As wild gazelle's on unapproached hills :—
“ My bright young captive ! thou hast rightly,
guessed ;
One year thy bondage has my heart redressed.—
Ha ! thou did'st say ?—But, for that perilous word,
I'll touch thy young heart with a golden sword,

And thou shalt die—shalt die ! I love thee well,
But thou shalt perish in thy midnight cell.
Bright child of youth and beauty ! ne'er did I
Dream—dare to think that I should make thee die,
Should thus destroy thee—*thee* ! thou dear accurst !”
She paused—she gazed—hysterio laughter burst—
Soon turned to sobbing deep, which shook her frame
Till softest flow of woman's weeping came.
She walked, calmed, gazed, th' embodied poetry
Of wild heart's life-time, humbled yet how high !
Of woman's weakest passions, and most strong,
In one collected and concentrated throng :—
“ Sir Captive, hear me : for my love and wrath,
Next midnight hour shall be thy hour of death.
O ! not for worlds of price I'd have thee live
To *her* the homage of thy heart to give !
Then shalt thou all be mine—my own ! Thy frater
No savage minister of death shall maim ;
But subtlest powers shall lure thy life away,
And lingering beauty still invest thy clay.

Thy princely body then with balms I'll bathe,
And with the rare Egyptian linens swathe,
With unguents stained of antiseptic power,
To keep thy beauty 'yond the mortal hour.
And thou shalt lie upon a stately bier,
With fragrant oils and naphtha burning near ;
And I shall come, how oft ! and live with thee
Throughout the night, so dear art thou to me !
Then if—O ! foolish heart ! O ! thought how vain !—
Yet if rare powers could make thee live again,
And love me then, wise dwarfs of monstrous birth,
The young and bright enchantresses of earth,
And wrinkled hags that spell the fearful weirds,
And old-eyed Magi with their silver beards,—
O ! I would bring them all to raise thee up !
But now—but now, must come my trembling cup :
For I have sworn ere twice the moon be by—
O ! thou art bright and dear—but thou shalt die.”

V.

The Queen is gone ; what cares the captive's pride
That flings him on his straw, all fear defied ?
But yet one thought—his maid will come again,
But yet one thought—her truth and pledge remain
To bring release, gives new anxiety,
And restless dread to prematurely die.

Throughout the night his hurrying footsteps trode
The narrow circuit of his dark abode ;
Till, starting to the jailer's morning key,
Fast beat his crowding heart—'tis she—'tis she !
But time still lingered, and no voice for him
Came ; he was left with spirit blank and dim,
Was left to fling his wearied body down,—
If sleep his cares may in oblivion drown.

Sleep came not : but there came the last stern
fears,
Like the loud sounding of incessant spheres,

Burst on his soul Eternity's dread things,
And tremblings came of awe, the sufferings
Of loftiest natures, as they thrill to know
Death's change sublime, and fear yet long to go
Before Heaven's high consistory to stand,
And on God's clear tribunal lay their hand.

Now day—how slow to his impatient tone!—
Like a bright bird throughout the heavens has flown,
And night invests. His jailer seeks him not
To lead his footsteps to their freer spot;—
What may this mean? Must it be hope or fear
Of Geraldine, or queenly vengeance near?
How stood he then, how listened as the cries
Of tumult, far and near, began to rise
On streets of Fez! and hope, delusive, heard
The sound of liberty for him prepared.
It seemed to him men hurried to fro,
And met for him: And through continuous flow

CANTO I.

Of the swayed din, loud cries, still breaking, came
To his hushed heart, with shouting of his name.

All ceased:—hope ceased: alternate fears arose;
Down on his straw his wearied frame he throws,
Heart, aspect, fallen, and black as night profound;
Upsprings again—stands—listens for a sound;
But nought's now heard, save here and there a
cry,
Like son of Belial's from his nightly sty.
Then on his lowly bed of suffering
He sternly waited what the night might bring.

VI.

Came sleep: He slept till to a thrilling tone,
Which named his name; he waked—'Tis she—his
own—
His Geraldine! Mute stood she, motionless,
Save that a pang of pity's sweet distress

Passed through her fair frame shuddering, as she
heard

The captive's fetters, as he wildly stirred,
And kneeled, and to the floor was deeply bowed,
And thus the homage of his heart avowed :—

“ Come near, fair one—they say my day's far
gone,

And—dark to me !—the night of death comes on,
So dark, because—O ! pardon !—hear the truth !
Because, sweet maid, I leave thee in my youth.
O ! now wilt thou forgive this heart of mine,
And let me love thee, beauteous Geraldine ?”

She heard—nor blushed ; in nature's holy power
'Bove woman's coyness raised in such an hour :—
“ 'Tis mine to save thee now. Young Captive, rise,
Before thee still the way of glory lies,
And thou must compass it : and shalt thou not,
To whom bright honour can be ne'er forgot ?”

“ Go o’er my neck, sweet prophetic ! Yea, I
This night for thee might deem it nought to die !
How silently I’d bleed at every vein,
To set thy praise above the world’s disdain !
How firmly try to be as man should be,
Well to approve thy gentle prophecy !
Then make thee queen of all that beauteous are !
And set on high thy glory like a star !
Wert thou mine own the while ! O ! but mine own !
My bright young stranger, near my father’s throne !
Now hear me, love—O ! be approved by Heaven
The thought this moment to my spirit given !—
For I shall come upon a future day,
And steal thee from this perilous land away,
And thou wilt be my good young Christian wife,
And I will love thee all my days of life !”

She stood with trembling in her beauteous frame,
With downcast eyes ; and paleness o’er her came :—

"Heaven shield those sisters sweet, that golden
boy,

And raise him to his father's throne with joy!

And who but I must watch them for her sake

Who bade me love them, and young Christians
make?

No, no, good prince—thy generous heart I see—

What shall I say? It may not,—must not be.

Yet in such hour I'll speak; and, noble youth,

Dear art thou to me, for thy lofty truth,

O! more than thrones, and crowns, and kingly
brows!

Young prince, beyond what female grace allows

Hold me not light and bold; but all my life,

I'd love to be thy true and faithful wife.

Now thou must go: And think not—O! 'twere
vain—

My hope must be to see thee ne'er again.

Go, glory in thy youth, for good thou art;

Yet sometimes think—Alas! this poor fond heart!"

"My soul, is she not dear! I care not now—
 Let bonds be mine,—to darkness let me bow:
 Here, maid, I stay—I go not—here I dwell;
 Shall tongue reproach thee for my broken cell?
 For thee I joy to hail each fettered morrow:
 Ne'er—ne'er for me the salted rods of sorrow
 Shall strike those lovely eyes."

"Twere task but alight
 From gratitude to justify this night.
 But now thy keeper, bribed with gold, is won
 To undo thy fetters ere this hour be run;
 Nay more, to help thee from our gates, and guide
 On to thy native home across the tide.
 There—sweet young prince!—But hark!" she
 softly said,
 "Thy jailer comes," and bent her lovely head.
 Was it to whisper? Or his cheek to touch
 With hers so soft? How little, yet how much!

'Twas nature's irrèssistible appeal,
Young, warm, yet delicate and holy seal !
And with his kiss he paid her silent vow,—
A thousand times upon her lip and brow
To be repaid—But Geraldine is gone ;
And Julian turns, and feels he is alone.

END OF CANTO I.

THE
CAPTIVE OF FEZ.

CANTO II.

THE
CAPTIVE OF FEZ.

CANTO II.

PROUD lights are up in Abusade's high halls,
And nightly splendour floods his palace walls,
Th' illumined boast of Northern wars, that still
To flashing victory turn his kingly will.
What though the arm disused of Abusade
Aside his youth's war-leading sword has laid,
Yet still he claims—what monarch less would
claim?—
To wear the emblazon of his soldiers' fame.

On Afric's north sea-border, and the coast
Of fronting Europe, gleams his dusky host,
Led by Zemberbo, who still quells the bands
Of Portugal, and menaces her lands.

And in his palace of illumined halls
King Abusade for nightly goblets calls ;
And to self-glory turns each dreamy thought
Of news—still conquest—from Zemberbo brought.

Accordant to his self-delighting fame,
His state and garb the warrior-king proclaim.
On mats, where Muftis kneel, of horreh's hide,
He dares to sit in his peculiar pride.

His sash with poniards gleams ; beside him laid,
Slung from his shoulder is a sheeny blade ;
And round his grizzly locks his turban white
Encircling shines like wreathed moon of light,
With jewel-stars bedropped, with snowy plumes
High-dressed, as for the fight a prince assumes.

And oftentimes the kingly Sybarite
The white Zenone from her halls will cite,
To see her flush beside her harp, and hear
Her intermingled song so soft and clear,
To win his soul throughout the pleasing coil
Of varied thought without the mental toil :
For this the double joy that music gives,
To sooth the soul whilst it intensely lives.

II.

Look where she sits ! Behold the lovely witch !
So wildly white ! O ! creature rare and rich !
Swells her deep bosom leaning to the harp,
As if her heart the golden strings would warp.
Far looks her eye, now keen, now softly dim,
O'er some new hazard of appropriate hymn ;
Till bursting—beauteous storm !—upon the fence
Of golden wires, her hurrying fingers glance.
Her white robes fluttering live ; like ruffled swan
Turned to the waters, seems th' impassioned one,

A startled thing about to launch away
O'er undulations of her own wild lay.
But hark ! but hark ! a new and bolder theme !
Started the monarch from complacent dream,
Not yet with wine o'erwhelmed---what may it mean,
Such stormy music from his harem-queen ?
Instinct with daggers, seen, with fast deep blows
The chords oppressed : the stabbing tempest grows.
He raised his eyes ; far in the long bright room
He saw her forehead shadowed with a gloom ;
And still, so shone her look concentrated,
Seemed coming near the creature's angry head !
He wished to question---but behold ! a slave
For Chief Zemberbo prompt admittance crave :---
" Morn's dawn must see him back upon his way
To war, nor brooks his present wish delay."

Waved Abusade ; Zenone's flashing form
Went from the hall like white mist of the storm.

III.

Came on Zemberbo to admission lent
From ~~hid~~ reluctance, or more free assent.
A sultry wrath was on his forehead high,
Like copper thunder-cloud ; his kindled eye
Sent out fierce question like a bickering sword ;
And thus he stayed not for his sovereign's word :—
“ High King of Fez, if e'er my sword availed—
Of ~~this~~ no more—Be now my justice hailed :
Pledge of my zeal for right, behold I give
To justice back this princely fugitive.”
He turned and shewed young Julian led in chains,
From sickness faint, or worn with dungeon pains.
“ This boy, my Liege—what time the sun's first light
Flames in the tree-tops on the eastern height,
And heavenward eagles high through morn repair
To clear their green eyes in the dew-cold air,
Sate by a distant spring, the fugitive,
To cool his sickness and his limbs revive.

There found by chance, as on to Fez I came,
I swept him back—I yield him to thy claim.
What though I sent him, in my battles ta'en,
In Fez an honoured captive to remain,
Declared my kinsman, bone and blood of mine,
And far-descended of the Prophet's line ;
Yet—notwithstanding—yea, forgetting all,
This hand of mine again shall knit his thrall ;
So thou, my Sire, high King, wilt deign to shew
My wish not scorned, but him a traitor-foe.
Cast forth the dog ! no measured pains for him !
Let dropping dungeons rot his youthful limb !
So by his punishment his crime's inferred :
Yet here my sovereign shall, nay must be heard."

How flushed the king ! how darkly bloomed his
pride,
To guess what first Zemberbo seemed to hide !
He started ; nor his kindling wrath concealed,
As rose Zemberbo's challenge more revealed.

In twists dividing, curled his beard with ire
Instinct ; his wild eye trimmed its lurid fire.
He rose, his sabre sheek, he paced the room ;
He sat again with mute considerate gloom ;
Like seasoned timber of the dark-grained oak,
He raised his settled face and grimly spoke :—
“ Good now ! Sir Chieftain, pr’ythee deign to bow
The dark defiance of that servant brow !
Then may we tell—remind thee of thy boast
To win that town which opes our northern coast,
Held by the fee. Beyond thy promised date,
This captive prince was kept in princely state.
Thy boast was vain : it pleased us then to try,
If th’ offered town from chains and death might buy.
And by our throne, and by our royal will,
If thus redeemed not, death awaits him still.
And thou !—nay, he shall perish in an hour,
But to remind thee of our sovereign power.”

He clapped his hands ; came trooping to his will
His giant negroes, and the chamber fill.
Yet dauntless stood Zemberbo, eyed his king,
Then proudly turned and scanned the sable ring :
He rose—he towered as o'er the warlike brunt ;
And darker grew his high embattled front ;
And flashed his eye, as brings the steely dint
Red seeds of fire from the deforced flint.
“ Me menace not,” he said with whisper hoarse,
Like the sea-captain's heard throughout the course
And din of fight ; “ Me menace not, proud king ;
A thousand hearts are ready forth to spring
To turn my death to vengeance : Ere I came
With burning zeal from gyves this boy to claim ;
(For in the distant battle I had heard
Myself despised in him thus doomed to ward)
In my great captains' hearts I breathed my fear,
And won their oaths to save me challenged here,
This captive too ; or if—No more my lord,
I haste me now my fealty to record :

With boldest war I've warred to take that town,
Nor shall I cease till it adorn thy crown.
Around it, flashing down the coast, o'er all
Careers the aged king of Portugal,
With vigour, like the eagle's youth renewed,
Has baffled me ; yet shall he be subdued.
Deign Sire, still send me to the embattled line :
Thine be the conquests ; but this captive mine."

In doubtful pause awhile the monarch sate :
With scorn he longed to close the bold debate ;
But danger bade him scorn and ire forego,
For, than Zemberbo, as a friend or foe,
No mightier spirit could ten kingdoms shew.
" Off slaves !" The guards retired. The wine
was brought,
And quaffed the king to seem of careless thought ;
But 'twas his pride, to affect the liberal mood
Of drunken cheer to hide his wish subdued.

And thus, with air of frankest courtesy,
He gave his hurt and rankling soul the lie :—
“ Nay, claim the ransom of a thousand slaves,
My warrior-chief whose name a kingdom saves.
Go to thy palace, rest thee ; come at morn,
One day thy presence must our court adorn.
Then haste to war, and take the wished-for town :
And be thou still the glory of our crown.”

IV.

Long sate the king in mute, grim discontent,
And eyed the door by which Zemberbo went.
Then—then in haste as from himself to hide
His vengeance braved, and quelled his angry pride,
With low, quick sign intense, he asked the bowl,
And fast the ruddy deluge whelmed his soul.

Now sleeps the King : And from the hall is gone
The slave who bears the wine. Lo ! she comes on,

With bursting light, as if to brave some ill,
The ivory creature with the passionate will :
Who but Zenone ? Round th' unconscious king
She flits, as if to fan his slumbering.
Ha ! see—behold the lovely Fury stand
With gleaming poniard in her restless hand,
Drawn from her breast ! She eyes her victim-king,
But shudders o'er the wild-conceived thing,
And hides, like little sister of her breast,
Again the dagger 'neath her silken vest :—
“ Black slave of Eblis ! in this hour of night,
In this bright palace, by the scented light
My soul could see to shed thy sleepy blood ;
But—but I shrink ; nor yet the season's good.
Yet come it shall :—thy spirit, unbeameared
With wine and sleep, shall own me to be feared.
Sleep on—sleep well, thou glorious one ! for thee
'Bove love of women, O ! my love shall be,
To care for thee—to keep thee mine—apart—
Sealed—consecrated to my vow—my heart.

Boy—captive, thou ! Why thou art near again !
Yea thou can'st flee not from my splendid chain !
What though I failed within thy dungeon-cage
To shew thee dead, to fire Zemberbo's rage ;
Yet is he chafed, and sorely, for thy chains ;
And half my task to rouse him but remains.
This night—this hour—if Melki speed to raise
The facile mob against him in a blaze
Of vulgar envy, and scarce groundless dread
Of haughty one, this night his king who chid ;
Then shall we make him think that king his foe,
And fast the thought shall to rebellion grow.
Be still, my heart, and wait."

Thus murmured she,
Still circling round the monarch flittingly ;
Then flashing went she from the hall in haste,
As if to use some plan which ran to waste.

V.

Meanwhile soft slumber, in Zemberbo's halls,
On Julian's wearied limbs and spirit falls.
Stretched on a silken bed the youth forgets
In sleep his sickness and his fond regrets.
O'er sea and coast far roams he in his dreams,
By the blue rushing of his native streams ;
Hears the soft din of boys at early play
On Lisbon's streets ; and evening roundelay,
The sweet abettor of the olive maids
Of Tagus, dancing 'neath his chestnut shades.

Now pausing by his couch, now through the hall
The stately footsteps of Zemberbo fall.
Anon he lists the breathing soft and deep ;
Again respects the wearied captive's sleep.
Is this from love? God shield the youth, and spare
From deadly circling of Zemberbo's care !
'Tis only better than the love which binds
Their victims dearly to revengeful minds ;

'Tis only prelude of a headlong sway ;
The perilous softness of the tiger's play,
Who rubs his victim with a velvet paw,
Till fierce blood sting, or hunger's ravenous law.
Lo ! by the silver lamp he bears, you trace
Grim passion working in his muscular face ;
And shook from th' inward strife of spirit, lo !
High toss, as in the winds, his plumes of snow
'Bove turban green, which sheds a lucid hue
O'er the black serpents of his big-veined brow.
" Fall must King Abusade ! " like grating wheel,
Harsh murmurs thus his dangerous heart reveal,
" And let me perish too, if fail shall I
To set—to kindle, e'er this kingdom, high
My wrath, a sign—a portent—to be feared
More than the red sheaf of the comet's beard,
When shakes the fiery hermit in the west,
Above th' astonished lands his chin unbleat !
Dread Prophet, give me aid ! "

He took his spear,
And touched the captive with its point of fear,
Twice touched his brow ; held forth the silver light,
And made it flash before his glimmering sight :
“ Be up, Sir Youth ; 'tis my o'erruling hour,
And Nature's and the Prophet's in his power.”
Thus darkly spoke Zemberbo : and the youth
Sprung, sleep-renewed, and beld to know the truth.
And first he scorned to don a Moslem dress,
Nor menaced vengeance could his scorn repress.

“ List boy—obey, and live : The battle field
I left, from chains to take thee and to shield.
I met thee, swept thee from thy homeward way,
And bore thee back to front the tyrant's sway,
Gave thee not up : Thou know'st how I for thee
Dearer of my king have dared to be.
But wherefore was't? That even a monarch's
power
May not presume to touch thee from this hour.

That o'er thee, thus my free peculiar charge,
My power to tempt thee, I may well enlarge.
Yea, by the Holy Stone! nor was it less
My wrongs to challenge in thy chained distress.
Yea, by the Holy Stone! and in this hour
'Twere slight to make thee prophet of my power,—
To bid thee forth, and through their city go,
And long thy leanness to this people shew :
But tell them for thy youth a sacrifice
A large atonement I shall fast devise ;
And for myself dishonoured in thy chains,
Shall bow their steeples to the neighbouring plains :
As for their King—we'll tame from fierceness high
The wine-fired salamanders of his eye.
Yet, first obey me : don these robes."

" Why no :

If thanks, Sir Chief, for thy strange love I owe,
'Tis freedom only gratitude can shew.
If still a captive—now beneath thy might,
To doubt thy love, to question is my right.

And in that right I've dared—still dare refuse
Th' apostate symbol of your faith to use.
If, as by thee averred, our blood's the same ;
Ask of thyself if threatenings shall me tame
To play the renegade : Why then indeed
Mightst blush to own me of your Prophet-seed !”

Deigned not his quest Zemberbo to renew ;
But clapped his hands, and brought a sable crew.
“ Bind him.”

They bound the youth.

“ On slaves—but hold !
What mean these shouts ? By Allah ! they are
bold.
Again ? What ho ! my arms ! Each man his blade !
Bela, look forth—report this mad parade.”

VI.

Thus they within. Meanwhile a motley rout
Around Zemberbo's palace wildly shout,

Claims—threat—denounce; and o'er the swarthy
host,

Swayed to and fro, the fiery brands are tossed.

“Allah be praised! the traitor-den's aloof

From other dwellings; hurl them to the roof,

Aloft—high—higher!” Ner in vain they fall;

But seize with flaming tongues the lofty hall.

“Down with the traitor!” Lo! from lattice high

Forth glares Zemberbo's startled majesty,

Out-stretched his neck and head, tossed to and fro,

As with wild impulse to o'erleap the foe,

Far flying high: As wakes from slumbering mood

In lofty chambers of the ancient wood,

When billowy gulfs of fire come on by night,

And this way, that way, bends to wing her flight

The startled stork, he flashed from side to side.

“Down with the rebel and the rebel's pride!

On—fire his green head—burn the boastful sign

That vainly styles him of the Prophet's line!”

Thus rose renewed the menace. He on high
Far waved his hand ; then burst his mighty cry :—
“ What, ho ! ye men of Fex ! On—force the door !
And help to save from fire a sunless store.”

The chief has left the roof. The crowds below,
Fired with the lust of gold, shout, onward go.
Borne through the yielding doors blind numbers
press ;

But turned the foremost from a wild redress,—
Back howling turned, rolled back the fickle wave,
And to the light their hideous quittance gave :
Eyes gashed across, and white bones of the brow
Bared, noseless, earless heads, stern work avow
Of swords within : The gulled and suffering brood
Fast fled, and howled with mouths o’erflowed with
blood.

Smote with electric panic reeled the host
Of gleaming visages, and back was tossed.
Save ! save ! for lo ! forth flashing, coming on,
Like Eblis darkly from his blazing throne,

Strides stern Zemberbo; drives the human rack,
His sable globe of warriors at his back,
Round captive Julian, on to central square
Of Fez: their haughty station shall be there!
And round the captive firmly, mutely stood
The warrior ring and faced the multitude;
For rallying, circling, wavering, serrated
With hollowed far-retiring flaws of dread
And bold abutments of vindictive rage,
The popular ring their warfare 'gan to wage.
In dark concentric orbit round his band,
Slow stalked the Warrior-Genius of the land.
Vengeance was on his brow; his eye's deep fire
Burned the wild fuel of his wrath's desire;
Bare was his head; with mighty scymitar,
He faced his foes, and kept them faint and far.

So passed the hours till, bravely kept at bay,
The angry mob began to melt away.

**“ What ho ! my guards, could we, the stately rocks
That dare be warred on by the battle-shocks,
Fear yon inglorious tide ? ”**

Thus boasted loud

**The sable chief as waned the circling crowd ;
His aspect lightening with a savage glee,
Like glossy billow of the wine-faced sea.
He took his mighty sword and waved around,
Then stooped, and with it wrote upon the ground
Short notes of desolation—war, death, fire,
Captivity to child, and wife, and sire.**

**“ So be ye read at morn, and on to noon,
My glorious lessons, to be bettered soon !
We thank thee, gracious king, for hearts resolved,
And work, half-thought of, on our swords devolved !
Thine be the praise ! But deem us not unkind
If we shall yield to thee no feeble mind,
To flee from thee to deserts, and to creep
To windy caves for terror-shaken sleep ;**

E.

To wait by lonely lakes ; to climb the high
Stairs of the rocks where spotted creatures lie ;
Up in the wind's rough eye, long hours untold,
To sit like jointless palsies, shook with cold,
And hunger-bit ; to wander without shrouds
On mountains, subject to the weeping clouds.
Beyond a jest—this night shall proudly raise
My swelling heart above its thankless praise
Of loyalty misnamed : The die is cast.
Slaves do our wish, the time's already past :
She waits prepared : be prompt ; the dawning hour
Must see us far beyond the tyrant's power."

Ere ceased the chief, his sable slaves had bound
The captive's eyes, and raised him from the ground.
Onward they bore him fast nor stayed, before
Their steps seemed echoed o'er a marble floor.

VII.

“ Unbind,” the deep voice of Zemberbo cried ;
And, from his eyes the silken sash untied,
The captive saw a chamber stretching far,
Decked with the trophies of triumphant war:
To guard a door four stately slaves were seen,
Determined each as dragon in his mien :
Like living jewels shone their watchful eyes,
That dared to wink not o’er some guarded prize.
But hark ! but hark ! O ! far and sweetly thrills
Some spirit’s plaint, some child’s of many ills.
Swell the soul’s bursts, the sweet relapses die
Like heart consenting to life’s latest sigh,
Wild as the hymns which youthful men have
 dreamed,
Or thrilling song of Magdalene redeemed.
Can he be moved ? Throughout Zemberbo’s frame,
Though stern of mould, a softened trembling came.
But passed the light and momentary sway ;
Then through that guarded door he claimed his way,

Gained prompt admittance, led his captive on
To inner hall of marble's sablest stone.
There by the light that softly, dimly shined,
Fair form was seen upon a couch reclined,
So fair, she seemed, at bottom of the hall,
A pencilled cloud upon the sable wall.
Raised was her veil, and through its haze of green
Like starry night her jewelled locks were seen.
Her downcast eyes accorded to a strife
Like sorrow fluttering in her bosom's life;
And, idle now, her hand far-drooping leant
Above a mandoline whose song was spent.

"Why, Zara—sister !" said the chief, " dear
twin !

Heed'st thou not me ? Must I no welcome win ?"

She started—rose—she named him—wildly
sprung,
A sister all, and to his bosom clung.

He kissed her brow that bore the trace of years ;
He kissed her eyes that swam in glazing tears ;
Then to her couch he led her by the hand,
Before her stood, her features fondly scanned.

“ A moment bowed she from his gaze above,
Then to him turned with all a sister's love :—

“ Ay ; waste is here : long years have done their
part,

And shares of grief have ploughed this brow and
heart.

But grief nor years have hurt my love for thee,
Nor thou severe—Oh ! how unkind to me !

No, no : if wrongs—what care I for the whole ?

Come to this heart, lone brother of my soul !

And I will tell thee how I've longed for thee,

And ask thy dangers all and love for me.

For thee, for thee, my vigil never sets,

Still hopes thy visits o'er my long regrets :

How far between ! alas ! and still more far !

And I so lonely with my fears of war !

O ! thou twin-being of my life ! can I
Forget thy love for me, so pure and high
In our young years ? Our kindred early lost,
Mine all thou wert, and in thyself a host !
Can I forget how in our native clime
With you I passed my days of golden prime ?
Morn's pearly hours ? and happy still with you,
Rode on young camels through the falling dew ?
Ay, scan the forehead of thy sister-twin :
Is there not sorrow here beyond her sin ?
Because from me long years has been estranged
Thy heart ! thy love to cruel bondage changed !
Thy youth's twin-love ! O ! God ! from thee such
wo ?

And is it so, Zemberbo,—is it so ?
Yet, yet again, all blame I will unsay,
For now thou'rt come to live with me for aye ;
To more than pay the sufferings of the past :
And, ills forgot, I'll love thee to the last."

“ No : Lilla Zara, sister of my life !
For thee—for thee must still be warlike strife.
Think not for Abusade of Fez alone,
Have been my battles, to maintain his throne.
No : storms ; red fields ; long, harassed, childless
years ;
Beyond myself, for thee a thousand fears,—
By Allah ! and those tokens ! thee I love,
And hold thy glory far my life above.
For thee those wars ; for thee still mine to fight,
To win a moon o’er thy dishonoured night.
Weak, silly one ! be thou at peace the while,
Hast thou not maids thy bondage to beguile ?
Italian singing girls, light hearts of France,
And maids of Spain that to the timbrel dance ?
Or, would’st thou more ? Fond Arab ! be at peace,
The hour shall come to bid thy sorrows cease.
If with affection simple it were mine
To love my sister of the Prophet’s line,

By Heaven ! I'd think it light and slight t' atone
Each tear of thine with heart-drop of my own.
But I must bear me to a lofty plan
Severely proud, beyond thy power to scan."

" Name thou not love, till thou thy pride shalt
bow,
One fond far message from me to allow :
Tell but my boy his mother pines in thrall,
And win his visit to this lonely hall."

" Now, by our Prophet ! but he'd laugh to scorn,
And, named at eve, forget thee ere the morn.
Or he would blush to own thee in a court;
Or turn his black-browed bastardy to sport.
Nor fondly deem a mother's hopes would be,
From such a visit, here fulfilled to thee !
At least he'd spurn thee and thy yearning soul,
That strove t' impose the Prophet's wise control ;

Yea, were he love and thou all eloquent,
Here would he spurn thy pleadings idly spent ;
Here would he part—again from thee would go,
Alike indifference or his love thy foe.”

“ O ! he would be my dragon and would guard !
O ! he would be my true and great reward !
More than thy vengeance, would repay the past ;
And day and night would love me to the last !
And to my heart he'd make one sacrifice,
And join me in the Prophet's paradise !

“ But let me not be selfish : Is not this
Some captive child of sickness and distress,
Ta'en in thy wars, and by thy special care
Thus brought my spells and healing skill to share ?
Come near, thou young and pale, nor sue in vain
If I can heal thy wounds and spirit's pain.
Thou weep'st : perchance thy mother dwells afar,
And little sisters claim thee from the war.

Gay vests they sew for thee, the loved ; and still
To look for thee they climb the green cleft hill.
Lo ! one afar—'tis thou ; but O ! regret !
The stranger passes on : thou com'st not yet.
And they must ask to verge of modest shame
The home-returning warrior for thy name :
Must ask from morn to noon, must watch for thee,
Till gleams the sweet moon through the chestnut-
tree.

But weep not ; for that worn attire of thine
This hand shall sew a garment soft and fine ;
Well shall we care for thee, and heal thy pain,
And send thee to thy native land again—
Thy sisters' joy ;—nor long thy captive smart
Shall drink the sweet blood of thy mother's heart."

Why wept the youth ? O ! not for griefs his own ;
A chain mysterious o'er his heart was thrown,
Which to that lady and her sorrowing care,
His bosom bound to pity and to share ;

Since first her look, her voice, had made him start,
And waked old memories in his thrilling heart.

“ No,” said Zemberbo, sternly, “ he is brought
His faith to change and win the wiser thought.
I have a purpose with him great and high,
When he shall scorn the Liar and the lie
Of Nazareth. But fails my tongue to make
A captive, as in war my sword can take.
Thou with sweet tyranny of eloquence
Shalt to his heart our glorious faith dispense.
Unchanged, he dies ; if won, shall more than live :
My soul a high prerogative shall give.”

Then Lilla Zara shed her veil's green light
Around her, and addressed the captive knight :—
“ Young Christian captive, thou must die in youth,
If thou wilt yield not to the Prophet's truth.
Thou shalt not die—I cannot have it so ;
For thou art young the pangs of death to know.

What shall I say to thee to win thee well ?
Think of thy mother, sisters, far that dwell.
For her, for them, O ! now I'll plead with thee—
I have a son, how fast he'd bow to me !—
Great things may Allah to thy heart make known !
Now may the Prophet win thee for his own !
Look through thy bosom with his eyes divine,
And give new light, and make thy soul to shine !
O ! take the good alternative and live !”

“Yea, by the Prophet's beard ! my soul shall give,”
Burst forth Zemberbo, “on this lofty throne
Of Golden Fez to sit, and reign thereon.
Shall fall haught Abusade, who dared make bare
To prison ills this object of my care,
Dared make my will a worm : But for that thing
We'll tumble down the weak sustained king ;
And, high to lift that will above disgrace,
Shall set this captive-monarch in his place,

Clear his strange brows with glory and a crown,
And dare the kings of earth to take him down.
One reason good. But o'er it loftier far
A motive rules and guides me like a star,
T'avenge, to honour, and on high to place
This captive youth above the tyrant's race :
And why ? Because beside him shall be seen
High raised, his mother, and shall sit a queen.
By Allah ! he for her shall honour have ;
And round from foes my sword their throne shall
save.

Thus much my plan is changed, that I shall take
Her face from darkness for our young love's sake :
The more because my life shall be one aim
In blood of vengeance yet to wash her shame.
Ho ! one and both of ye ! attend—obey :
Dare not this night to thwart my spirit's sway :
Tempt not my time of grace : My sister-twin,
Behold thy child—and from perdition win—

Ta'en in my battles, for high place designed ;
And joy with him and honour thou shalt find,
As I have told ! But thou must change his faith,
Or, by thy shame ! he yet shall die the death."

" Allah ! this captive ! O ! my fond blind heart !"
Exclaimed that mother, rising with a start.
Trembling she turned like one that looks for aid,
And blindly, wildly, called her favourite maid,
She knew not wherefore. From her reeling dream
Of wildered joy forth springing with a scream,
She bared the shoulder of the youth to find
Some little mark which mothers well can mind.
And fast she claimed him by the token there ;
And thousand times she kissed his shoulder bare,
And kissed his forehead ; then, with gentle hand
Laid on his shoulder, long his features scanned :

“ My own ! my dear young stranger ! so thou’rt
come

To live with me, and bid my griefs be dumb ?
And never, never, wilt thou leave this heart,
Nor let my waning bosom pine apart !
But, oh ! these rags, what mean they ? Must I, too,
Of sorrows ask, and sufferings borne by you ?
So young ! so princely ! who, each morn and night,
Should’st rise, should’st lay thee down with all de-
light,

Joy-candles in those eyes, all spangled things,
Ne’er misty sorrow in their beauteous rings ?
My boy ! my child ! Can I indeed forget
That thou, like me, hast paid a grievous debt ?
Distressful chains, dull damps, dishonoured care,
Have fallen upon thy eagle-youth to wear !
And no kind bosom o’er thy ills to bow !
And ne’er a hand to wipe thy fevered brow !
Nor love, nor vigil, nor soft word of peace,
Nor hope from me to whisper thy release !

And I so near, and not to know of this,
To whom even sorrow's knowledge had been bliss!
But this is past. And perish bonds from thee,
My princely boy; be thou the bold—the free!"
She said, and, glorying in her fearless pride,
Forth drew a poniard from Zemberbo's side,
And cut the cords that bound her captive son :—
" So ever be, my child, thy bonds undone !"
Then turned she to Zemberbo with a smile,—
The quick re-action of a mother's wile,
Which felt, which feared, yet dared not once allow
Her spirit conscious of his frowning brow ;
But couched beneath th' assumed prerogative
Of sister's smile, which claimed him to forgive.
With bolder leave assumed she pushed his arm,
In sweet defiance of the frowning harm ;
And dared, with shew of fond and graceful art,
Replace the dagger near his mighty heart.

Again she saw her son in mean attire,
And fast, in truth, forgot Zemberbe's ire.
“What, ho!” she cried, “what, he! ye maids of
mine,
Come sew white vests of Roma's linen fine!—
My precious beggar-boy, advance and see
The noble fortune hoped, designed for thee
In sleepless workings of a mother's thought:
How kinder far than this thy captive lot!”
With gentle hand she led him to a seat,
Unrolled a silken web before his feet,
Wrought with fine needle-work, and shewed thereon
—With smile appealing to her captive son—
A gallant warrior in a princely garb,
Before ten thousand bounding on his barb.
High looked his eye and far, like warrior king's,
Who proudly home his conquering squadrons brings.
He in the van: behind, his thousands came;
Instinct each warrior with his leader's fame,

Beyond his own, with double ardour trode ;
Wide flung th' uplifted spears their sheen abroad ;
Shone banners terrible ; and trumpets high,
The whole attempered with dread harmony.
One spirit ruled the whole : so proud to dare,
The winged triumph seemed to rise in air.
But, blind to all beside, to him alone
That mother pointed in the van that shone.
And lo ! the wonders of a mother's heart,
Which to her hand could thus her love impart,—
So hoarded well—so lost not through the tide
Of long, long years—so to her work supplied !
True to the dear and unforgotten face
Of boy long lost, her soul had known to trace
The beauteous copy from his childhood fair ;
And Julian smiled to see his features there.
Nor less she smiled through tears of conscious joy,
And scanned his face :—" 'Twere true my princely
boy,

But for vile cares which mar thee, and which we
Ne'er dreamt entitled in our work to be ;
From which alone we failed thy face to know,
And, if not told, unclaimed had let thee go.
Well hast thou done, my heart !—and well hast
done !

Say this for me, my unforgotten son !
Declare for me ; and in this thing behold
A mother's love, to work a dream of old !”

Why rushed not forth the captive's heart to bless
Her love entire ? Came terrors to repress.
There, on the precious web he saw enwrought,
With love's device, a hope—a perilous thought :
His imaged form in Moslem garb was dressed ;
A caftan blue flowed o'er his linen vest ;
And round his brows the turban's deep green fold,
The princely lineage of the Prophet told.
He feared—he trembled—lest her love might try
To win him to a fond apostacy ;

Nor from that mother could his gloom be hid,
And thus his fears unguessed she fondly chid :—

“Nay, nay, no more : Are not those dark days
gone ?

And all thy sorrows vanished with my own ?
And now this hand, which wrought that web,
must still

A garment make thee—fashioned to my will.
And—O ! my boy !—and let me wreath thee now
A bright green turban for thy lustrous brow :
To thee, to me, one faith—~~one~~ hope be given,
And I'll not miss thee in the Prophet's Heaven.”

Nor spoke, nor answered to the proffered grace,
The captive knight, but darker waxed his face :
Far turned his eye, as if he could not brook
The silent pleading of a mother's look.
Her, trembling seized : Around she wildly glanced,
As if to see some danger new advanced.

"Fear not!" she cried,— "Is this a time for grief?"
He heeded not. She turned her to the chief;
His frowning brows with dread her bosom fill,
And quick she wails th' anticipated ill:—
"So thou wilt go?—art gone! and I am left
A desolate thing, how utterly bereft!"

"True mother of my heart! so lately found!
Thou precious stranger, to this breast yet bound
By links eternal! were it given to be,
Would I not live a thousand years with thee?
What shall I say? what do? For thy dear sake,
All bonds, save of dishonour, would I take;
For in my heart and soul I hold thee one
To claim the noblest service of a son.
But"—

"On, Sir Youth," Zemberbo cried, "say—
swear
By Allah! she is worthy of all care.

Were she the pure, as once I knew her pure,
High should she sit, nor darksome days endure :
Above ten crowns, a boast—a joy to me,
Above all price my bosom's twin should be.
For she was pure as Zemzem's holy spring !
For she was beauteous as an angel's wing !
How beautiful ! yet still more pure and good !
My spirit's twin ! the sister of my blood !
But for that she was pure, and is not now,
The Prophet holds my high recorded vow :
For I have sworn, and fought as I have sworn,
Will fight as I have fought t'avenge the scorn,
To wash before our nobles, as with fire,
Thy mother's feet with life-blood of thy sire.
Long have I warred to take him, and will take ;
The Prophet yet shall help me for her sake,
And I shall wash, as with the purging fire,
Thy mother's feet in heart-blood of thy sire.

**“ Now list the glory of thy father-king,
Who dared to shame my Lilla Zara bring,
With base, with black, with damned ingratitude,
Beyond the hearts of Tophet’s eldest brood !**

**“ He, prince, in early youth was captive made,
And wounded sore in Zemra’s palace laid ;
Beyond the leech’s aid there languishing,
Fast o’er him closed dread Azrael’s sable wing.
Came then to Zemra, Lilla Zara, child
Of loftiest charity, my undefiled !
She heard—was moved—his life she will recall ;
For, wiser than the desert daughters all,
Rare stones she knew of veins and spotty eyes,
And starry witchcraft that within them lies,
The precious bleeding rinds, and weeds of might
Far looked into by sovereign eyes of night,
All virtual flowers ; and how to win them knew
On Atlas gathered in their nightly dew.**

And in the wild and planetary hour
A talisman she framed of sovereign power ;
And Allah blessed her work of sweet young rath,
And up from dust she raised thy father's youth.
Now what for Lilla Zara shall be done ?
How he be grateful to redeeming one ?
He dared to tempt : she fled with him by night,
And in his kingdom shewed her tarnished light !
Well—style it love,—omnipotent they say,—
What then ? Ye deem not his could pass away ?
His father dead, 'twas his to mount a throne,
Bound to be glad his faithful one to own.
Dog in his heart, he sate thereon ; but seemed
Cheap thing who loved him and from death re-
deemed !
Forsooth !—no doubt ! her glory he desired ;
But other queen his kingdom's wants required.
And thus by kingly policy decreed,
A creature of large heart became a weed—

A—peace my soul ! for he a sword shall meet,
And pour his red atonement at her feet.
Even her a queen—his queen—my soul had
 spurned,
And deemed the Prophet's seed to tares had turned ;
But her, like harlot sitting by the way,
'Twas mine to steal and hide from blushing day :
So did I steal ; but left behind her boy,
To cut her wholly from th' unhallowed joy :
So brought to Fez, with darkness to confer,
Till won the vengeance that shall shine on her.
Such, Captive, is thy sire. And thee he loves
But to allay a conscience which reproves,—
Here selfish yet. Yea, tell me—has he not
Still hid from thee thy mother's pining lot ?”

“ 'Tis false at least,” the captive trembling cried,
“ That word which has for me his love denied.
So be the rest as false ! O ! be untrue
That tale, my mother, of such wrongs to you !

What shall be said? be done? Be truth not hid,
Till now I thought thee with the dreamless dead."

"Nor doubt, my child, thy father so believed;
And named me not, that thou mightst not be grieved.
Go bless his age; nor deem this wild tale true:
For me his love was more than love for you.
O! haste my boy—and his—haste, bid beware
Of stern Zemberbo's battle, and his snare,
Whose wrath is strange, as if a sun should rise
Of liquored blood to track the midnight skies."

O! that dread brow, o'erwrought with meanings
dark!
Bowed stern Zemberbo, as aright to mark.
Then from his lips compressed, and through his
beard,
Hoarse whispers harrowing, thus the words were
heard:—

**"No, thou fond fool ! his sire he ne'er shall see
Till blood-fulfilled my covenant shall be,
Till he shall see, and own it great and good,
My vengeance mirrored in his father's blood,
For thee dishonoured. If not, first of all,
I here shall hew this token of thy fall."**

**As pecks the wounded dove with bloody beak,
And with her wings strikes for her younglings weak,
So struggled Lilla Zara to entreat,
And wildly fluttered o'er Zemberbo's feet :—
"Crowns ne'er for me, nor kingdoms ! on his throne
Be lawful king ; I would not sit thereon !
No sun to me arise, nor silver moon,
Nor little star, but darkness be my noon,
If such thy will's alternative ; but save
This only one to sooth me to my grave !"**

**In mute continuance of her yearning quest
She strained Zemberbo's knees unto her breast ;**

And still her face upturned, by terror paled,
The silent pleading of her heart exhaled :
Nor vainly ; paused the chieftain not unmoved,
But soon his sterner heart this grace reproved :—
“ To business now, Sir Youth ; preamble long
Has kept us here attendant on the tongue.
Now brief : behold thy mother : live or die :
Thou knowest conditions, and we wait reply.”

“ Now, now, thou mother ! deem me not unkind ;
But, dear, dear one, record it in thy mind,
That I have loved thee with a soul which scorned
The fears of death, and vilely was not turned
To bribed apostacy—O ! precious sin,
The bribe thy presence and to joy therein !
Yet high the compact 'twixt us, very high,
That thou wilt bid me loathe the apostate's lie,
Wilt let me go ; that thee aright I love,
When only Faith and Christ I set above.

For this one God, who reigns above the sun,
Our years of ill and sorrow's vigils done,
Shall mildly judge us ; to one Heaven shall save,
When we shall rise redeemed from out the grave.
So hope—so bear thou up. God give relief,—
I cannot live and look upon her grief !”

Behold ! behold, the heart-convulsing strife
Which threatens to rend that mother's frame and life !
Nor wept, nor mourned she till the fiercer mood
Of grief to fearful patience was subdued :
Then quelled to trembling calmness was her tone,
As thus she told her hopes for ever gone :—
“ My son shall stay with me the waning night,
And rest in slumber till the dawning light :
One little hour !—ye dare not say me no !
And in the morning he will rise and go,
And leave his mother's heart, that would retain,
How ill at rest ! to see him ne'er again !

Oh ! can you not ?—Alas ! sweet boy, I tried
All to my wish to cheat thy noble pride,
When dared I take for granted thou wouldst ne'er
Maintain thy faith against my poor fond prayer.
Oh ! silly fraud ! Oh ! bands that must remove !
Nor thou within a mother's net of love !”

“Ho ! guards !” then cried Zemberbo : and appeared
His sable men with aspects charred and seared.
They seized the youth, so bade the chief, and bound
His eyes anew, and bore him from the ground.
Then, oh ! he felt, as he was borne away,
Her clinging kiss, which drew his heart to stay.
Then, from her torn, he heard the struggling plaint
Of heart bereaved that fought against restraint,—
How wished by him unheard ! “ Off—let me free !
Save me, my boy ! come back—O ! come and be
A young believer for thy mother's sake !—
Stay—stay, and teach me then thy faith to take,

That I may come unto thy Paradise ;
For longs my soul to have thee in the skies !”

VIII.

Now Julian starts as thus, beside his hand,
Is heard Zemberbo's voice of stern command :—
“ Watch, slaves, as ye have watched; the hour
draws nigh
T' approve and end your faithful ministry.
What time you hear my great black trumpet blow
O'er conquered Fez,—and I her conquering foe,—
Bring forth, on to the city's central square,
Alive or dead, your charge, and meet me there :
Embalmed, if dead ; if living, let her be
In robes of shame and mourning given to me.
Obey and live.” They murmured deep assent.
Then forth the guiding slaves with Julian went,—
For now the fresh-blown breeze around him flies—
Till, fast and farther borne, were freed his eyes.

A river by, he stood before a rank
Of stately trees that fringed the embowered bank.
Zemberbo near, and slaves, with upward eyes
To know the hour looked round upon the skies :
The skirring moon flew on her shining track,
And from her horntips tossed the wispy rack,
Boring the west ; o'er snowy Atlas high,
Ranged through the clearness of the southern sky,
With lengthened beams the stars told morn was
nigh.

“ Away ! 'tis dawn ; away ! my faithful slaves,”
Zemberbo cried, “ all speed the danger craves.
Disperse, disguise ye : shun that vengeful king :
Ere noon be with me at the silver spring
Where sate this captive when—Stay, with this gold
Buy steeds of strength, if ours the tyrant hold,
If back ye win them not. Once more, beware !
Away ! away ! this boy shall be my care.”

They went. He turned and to the captive said,
“ One word, Sir Youth : I now must be obeyed.”

“ Yea try,” cried Julian kneeling, “ Try me—
prove—

With sufferings task, so her thou wilt but love !
Turn heart of mine—this life—my blood and all
But to thy will to burst her savage thrall,
But to thy mercy—mind thine own bright twin,
O ! hide, forget, forgive a sister’s sin,
—If ’twas a sin to love—and end her night,
And lift her gentle heart unto the light,
As well thou ought’st, to whom that heart is given
To love thee onward to the gates of Heaven !”

“ Be up : ’tis vain : we hear thee not : we draw
From prayer nor penance our considerate law.
Know thou but this—and hold thyself prepared—
Still, for her tender sake, thy life is spared :

We give thee time to train thy wiser thought
Her creed to share, and win her happier lot,
Against a day when ye again may meet,
When thou must kneel a convert at her feet.
When o'er proud Fez we ride, in conquering hour,
At least we'll tempt thee with enlarged power."

Then rose for Geraldine the captive's fear
Of such a foe—of sure destruction near.
Yet, with bold shew to hide his sudden thrill,
And try foundations of the menaced ill,
Thus questioned he: "'Tis well: But what art thou
Dar'st boldly thus thy rebel plans avow?
With all thy valour, think'st thou to o'erwhelm
A 'stablished throne, and triumph o'er a realm?
Nor be it tried, nor loyal praise forgot,
Nor turn thy fame to darkness and a blot."

"Hast thou not read that in the years of old
Rose even in Allah's Heavens rebellion bold?

What wonder then on earth, if, trained by crime,
Hearts ripe for me should hail the promised time
Of thrones confounded? Vengeance, Terror, Pride,
And thousands more by law unjustified,
And thousands sprung from restless loins of change,
Wild dogs of blood that howl their hungry range
To lick the spotted sword, would swarm, and swear
To obey a wrath less just than this I bear.

And then the hearts, that I have led so long,
Would joy to follow, counting not the wrong.

Be this my argument. Nor more I state,

Nor more to thee my purpose vindicate :

Enough : Thou see'st whence power my will may
aid

To tempt thee so.—I now must be obeyed :

That stream shall sweep us from the tyrant's thrall :

Now let me bear thee diving 'neath yon wall,

But, ha ! betrayed ?”

For glimpsing points of mail

Behind the trees his startled eyes assail.

Came arm'd guards on :—" Yield to thy king : prepare,

Sir Chief, that bloody outrage to declare :
Give up"—Forth flashed Zemberbo's scymitar,
And on the foremost fell its edge of war
With sharing gash, and through a second fast,
And through a third the shearing vengeance passed ;
Still met the hemming foe with perilous haste,
And shed defiance far and savage waste.

Like fire-scrolled parchments, shrunk his shag lips
round,

And bared his ivory mouth that fiercely ground ;
Then heaved his nostril with disdainful ire,
And shook his locks, and gleamed his eye of fire,
Swept his unbaffled arm : With many a stride
Far-shifting, sped his work from side to side,
Till, pressed by numbers, in the stream he dashed,
A moment sunk, then rose, and fiercely flashed
Above the breasting billows, highly waved
His dripping sword, and thus the danger braved :—

“ Ho ! is there not of slaves so hotly bold,
Whose burning reins crave this appliance cold ?
Come share with me, and my amphibious steel
Shall let him blood and help the waves to heal.
Caitiffs we yet shall meet. Yea, tell your king
Of flashing sabres shall we presents bring.
On palace-roofs high watching, let him see
Our coming-on, that gloriously shall be
By light of burning towns: wild measuring line,
O'er hill and valley shall it stretch and shine !
So ! now for lanthorn of yon imaged moon,
To guide us forth and lead to vengeance soon !”

He said, and down into the waters went,
Which gurgled round ; nor shewed his re-ascent,
As watched his foes. But hark ! that mighty shout
Proclaims him safe their guarded town without :
The drifting stream has borne him 'neath the wall,
Now wo to them that in his path shall fall !

IX.

And, to his shout, thrice with his scymitar
He smote the wall, the earnest of his war :
Yet not his soul indignant was content
Till, fear-defying, to the gates he went
And smote them thrice. Then turned he to the
north,

To meet his troops his spirit rushing forth.
O ! for his steed ! Yet, strong of limb, he flew
To gain a hill far breaking to his view,
High on its sides unshorn to mock the chase
Of horsemen swift, and hide him for a space.
But lo ! comes on a stranger on his barb
Through the dim dawn, of Moorish front and garb.
Stood in his path Zemberbo, questioned high
Of name and place, and claimed a prompt reply.
“ A friend to Fez ; and tidings for the king,”
The horseman said, “ but death for thee we bring
If—Ha ! thou think’st my forward way to bar ?
Give place, and shun my weightier scymitar.”

“ Friend to the tyrant ? Perish for that word !”
Zemberbo cried, and struck his feeblèr sword,
Disarmed him ; smote again, and hewed away
His turbaned head, far rolling in the clay.
Wild plunged the steed and bore the quivering :
trunk,
With purple life-strings spinning ere it sunk ;
Nor sunk it yet, but sate a hideous sight,
Still held the reins with hands convulsed and white,
Till, tumbled by the victor from its place,
He sate instead, and urged his flying race.
And on—fast—far, he flew ; nor scorned to bless,
The gallant steed, whose speed was only less
Than his winged heart indignant : But he blessed
The tossing mane that swept his urging breast ;
And toyed with it, in madly trifling play
Of spirit, burning for a boundless sway.
And winds were gathered round the charger’s feet,
As forward still he bore the fast retreat,

O'er mountains strained, and on the valleys burst,
With strength that seemed for this wild journey
nursed,
Devoured the plain, and swum the rapid stream,
And shook its coldness from him like a dream.
Uprose the sun : Throughout a dower's ground
Fierce rode Zemberbo, scorning to go round ;
Brushed down the crashing tents, nor stayed to hear
Th' awakened sleepers with their yells of fear.
'Tis noon : An hour ago his charger died ;
Yet rides the chieftain on a steed supplied
By friendly Arab,—far, and still untired,
'Bove nature's weakness, with his purpose fired.
He met a wind from stormy summits blown ;
Yet fast through shade and sunny flaw went on,
Still onward, till he saw the rushing sea,
In great accordance with his energy.
Then o'er the tawny sands Zemberbo went,
And found his camp, and rested in his tent.

END OF CANTO II.

THE
CAPTIVE OF FEZ.
CANTO III.

**THE
CAPTIVE OF FEZ.**

CANTO III.

**MEANWHILE, reprisoned since the morning hour,
Again lay Julian in Zenone's power.**

II.

**In depths of night, when mortal men lie bowed,
Burst on his cell a soft embodied cloud
Of woman's charms ;—'Tis Italy's white child,
Zenone, lightening on some errand wild.
With lamp advanced, she looked upon his face,
As mute he stood in his inglorious place ;**

Now timid looked, now struggling to collect
Some failing impulse, by the woman checked.
So Julian judged ; and to his utmost scope
Of chains he paced, to undeceive her hope ;
And faster paced, as not himself t' allow
To guess the purpose which she would avow.
O ! knew she—felt she not this cold offence,
That proud Sultana, with the passionate sense ?
Life's wrath-touched liquors, o'er his hard denial,
Flamed in her cheek, as in a crystal vial,—
By double paleness drained ; and fast—and fast
Th' electric shiver through her body passed.
She flushed away—came back—stood—gazed : The
while
O'er her pale features shone a perilous smile :—
“ Sir Knight, thou think'st, because my heart is
faint,
That I shall try to move thee with complaint ?
Thou shalt not dare ! Sick, sick, indeed am I,
And this sore fever drinks my life-springs dry,

And I must perish. But the fever-power,
Yea death, shall not forestall my angry hour :
I could not die, my spirit is so strong
To deal with thee for thy presumptuous wrong.
Aha ! young Portugal, thou thoughtst to flee ?
But Chance or Fate would give thee still to me !
And who but I to dark Zemberbo sent
To tell thy chains, to stir his discontent ?
And taught him to impeach alone the king,
To prompt rebellion his proud heart to sting ?
For sore he felt, who bade thee honoured be,
Himself disgraced in thy captivity.
His heart a tropic, and a thunder-cloud
Each mood of his, his ire was bold and loud.
And fast he turned him from the distant brunt,
And fast he came with challenge on his front.
By chance he found thee—Thou art here, my
own !—
I leave thee now ; but I will come anon.—

And who but I his palace fired, to start
The farthest blood rebellious of his heart ?
Knew'st thou not this ? And is not his the power
To turn his wish to vengeance in an hour ?
And will he not ? And in my leash I hold
A hundred spirits more, as black and bold,
Ambition, Hate, all powers of worst renown,
Those passionate hounds that bay the kingdoms
down :

And I will let them slip : And *she* shall die ;
And in his blood King Abusade shall lie,
And in his children's blood : And what art thou,
Who wouldst not turn thee at my feet to bow ?
I go—I go, in midnight's hollow hour
To sit alone, and o'er thee shape my power.
No oracles of ancient men I'll cite,
Nor clasped books, t' instruct my spirit right ;
My heart shall be my oracle alone.
I leave thee now ; but I'll be back anon !

Fiends ! fiends ! O ! fiends ! ye all—ye plague me
sore ;

But I shall——Ha ! these weak days shall be o'er !”

She ceased : she showered away from out his
sight,

Her garments gleaming with an angry light,
Like thin pale blasts, that o'er the mountains run,
And stream with stormy splendour to the sun.

III.

How lovelier far in virgin purity,
She next who lightened to the captive's eye !
Beyond the lapse of doubtful days to him
Came Geraldine, into his dungeon dim.
With choir of maids she came ; her sisters young,
And brother, Ismael, round her fondly hung.
Attendant slaves, white armour forward bore,
And laid it gleaming on the dungeon floor.

What might it mean? And instantly without
Loud music burst, and rose a mingling shout,
Like war's accordance with some stern intent,—
Haply to death the captive to be sent.
He heard, but heeded not, nor thought of this ;
He saw but her, whom even to see was bliss.
Yet thus, as at her nod the train retired,
Quick fears he hinted, by his love inspired :—
“ My heart prophetic ! comes she not again ?
I dreamt of this, yet wished my longing vain.
Lady, I like not—”

“ Have I done amiss ?

Thou think'st me then”—

“ My glory and my bliss !

Now must I speak : prove—shew it—make it plain
No danger haunts thee, as thou com'st again,
And here am I not loath to bless my chain.
And I could bid my dreams of youth farewell
For hours like this, and glory in my cell,

So thou my beautiful ! my Fexzan maid !
Wouldst come to me, all-lightening through my
shade !

Wouldst often come—O ! thou must come each day,
And live with me, and never go away !

Yea still I'd have thy beauty's midnight gleams
To light my dark and disarranged dreams,
Sleep's huddled worlds. So uncreate my gloom,
So be my life in this inglorious tomb !

I did but speak to blame, because I know
The Moslem bigot fain would be thy foe,
And find occasion in thy glorious love,
That seeks me here, all selfish fears above.
But prove no perils here shall thee annoy ;
Then—then, come near, my life ! my more than
joy !”

“ Once have I failed ; yet thousand times again
I'd try to save thee from this dungeon pain,

H

From early death ; and send thee from this shore :
Yet haply weep because thou can'st no more."

" I do believe thee. Ah ! I feel my chains
In all their weight and dull benumbing pains
God help me now ! for I would now be free,
Sweet maid, to do some little deed for thee
Now do I feel these days undignified,
Still at thy peril my redemption tried.
By Heaven ! sweet Lady, in my father's land
Shamed were young knights such service to com-
mand—
Once to allow, where life is but esteemed
To help their maids, not be by them redeemed.
So do I blush again to let thee tell
Thy new attempt to free me from this cell,
And will not ask it, nor would have thee shew,
Would softly blame thee, and would bid thee go."

"Nay, let me come, let me my troth approve,
Grudge not one little triumph to my love."

"Go on: fulfil thy good young heart: nor I
Shall dare thy wish one moment to deny.
So weak, so worthless! let me passive be:
What right have I to dictate aught to thee?
Unless, unless my boast I could fulfil,
And dream,—for all thy love how little still!
Unless,—Did I not promise from this shore
To take my maid the dark blue waters o'er,
To banks of beauty, where the Tagus roves
Through the long summer of his orange groves,
Come let me lead thee by thy soft young hand,
And shew the glories of my father's land,—
Thine own! The breeze that smooths the forest
tops;
The dewy sun that sleeks the far green slopes;
Bright wings of birds all beautiful and free,
In living rainbows round the blossomed tree;

High overhead, on home-returning wings
The booming bee, that spins its airy rings ;
Dim lake ; the olive hill ; the valley's gleams,
Inlaid with blue bows of the wandering streams ;
White cities shining on the bending shore ;
Beyond, far fused, the ocean's silver floor,
For thee shall glorify the evening hour.
And I will lead thee to the summer bower,
Prepared for thee beneath the hill of vines,
Young Beauty of the South ! when day declines.
O ! thy dark locks of youth, my Alien-bright !
My cheek shall dry away the drops of night !
And when thou turn'st thee to the southern star,
And think'st upon thy native home afar,
Thou shalt not weep ; I have thee by the hand,
My heart is thine, my land shall be thy land.
And largely in thee shall that heart delight,
How gladly bring thee to my father's sight,
And shew thee in his court, and still to thee,
A queen, make princes proud to bend the knee !

Yet more—This is a dream : God let me die !
 I dare not wake ; for where, for what am I ?
 Yet, Geraldine, no braggart would I be,
 But ~~as~~ would love thee, were my young life free.
 I feel, I feel my love's unbounded debt !
 May God forget me when I thee forget !”

“ And—and—good prince !—alaa ! what should
 I say ?

How slight were death thy kind thoughts to repay !
 So shalt thou lie not in this idle rust,
 Thy manly forehead bowed to shameful dust :
 Such place is not for thee, to whom is given
 A spirit open as the sun in heaven,
 And loftiest aims to raise thee o'er thy peers,
 And all the promise of fame-honoured years.”

“ Thou maid ! I know thou ne'er wilt weary be
 In prophecy of noblest things for me !

I know but this, thy love for me would fly,
To find me out, beyond the flaming sky,
Beyond th' imagined climes so beautiful
Of Heaven, and Tophet's fierce-emblazoned pobl;
And, onward still, beyond Creation's goal,
Swift as th' unsandalled travel of the soul!
Yet know there's mighty judgment in thy scheme
My exiled youth from bondage to redeem,
In all thy love; unless my freedom may
With more than gratitude thy heart repay.
Nor sweetly dare to call it safety—life,
If, far from thee, I lose my virgin-wife."

"Nay think me not all generous, for I crave
High Heaven to bless me in my scheme to save,
Not less than thee, our house against the power
Of dark Zemberbo in rebellion's hour."

" Zemberbo comes? and you can let me free?"

" Ha! thou a traitor to my care would'st be?
But list my plan, thus framed:—a Santon lives
Within our court, and to our father gives
Strange spells of counsel, held in high repute,—
Too high for heathen liar's attribute.
He boasts enchantments to his knowledge given;
And starry wisdom won from scrolls of heaven,
Since when on Atlas, in a brooding cave,
To mystic lore his days and nights he gave:
Then oft, what hour the cold and circled moon
Looks down from blue depths of her stainless noon,
On Atlas glazing, as above she shines,
The silent forests of his savage pines,
Came forth the hermit-wizard from his nook,
To spell the leaves of heaven's high-blazoned book;
Or wandering through the dews and silver haze,
In shadowy glens, o'er steep untrodden ways,

To win their juice he gathered many a flower,
Strange weeds of sleep, and every virtual power.

“ Now from this wild diploma he presumes
To haunt our palace, and all-proud assumes
To frame resistless talismans : and still
Our royal father yields him to his will,—
Trust ill-deserved, as judge we from th’ event
Which gave the liar to our purpose bent.
The wondrous Axuch, faithful slave sublime,
Who knows deep wisdom of the ancient time,
And reads men’s bosoms like a written scroll,
First judged this Santon a deceitful souk
From this, and from my knowledge that he claimed
And gained all credence, was my purpose framed.
By Axuch’s aid th’ impostor won with gold,
Against the daring of Zemberbo told,
To cheat our monarch’s fears, that starry heaven
A bright certificate of hope had given :—

‘ No hard defence: behold! its lines evince
A king and kingdom by a captive prince
For Fez preserved: But when, is not declared.—
O! were it now, her noblest king were spared!—
But how fulfil the lofty oracle?
And where the captive that shall so excel?
Th’ appointed prince? Behold ’tis writ of him,
Brought shall he be from out a dungeon dim,
With warlike pomp, in armour white arrayed,
Around him buckled by a royal maid.
A prince—the nation’s hope—the royal son
Shall in his hand lead forth the appointed one,
To join the royal troops, to shine in war
Against the rebel foe a baleful star.’
Thus spoke th’ instructed cautious liar well:
And I am here: nor boots the rest to tell.
And I—this hand—shall buckle on thy mail;
And thou shalt go: nor shall my purpose fail.
And saved and safe, perhaps thou wilt divine
In future days what meant this thought of mine,

What meant my wish that bade the Santon say,
A royal maid the captive must array.
O ! was it not that I might see thee now ?
Then must our court, to chains that made thee bow,
Atonement give,—so was it mine to tell
A prince must lead thee from this dungeon cell.
Though, too, I wish before our troops t' approve
Our boy, that they may see him and may love."

"Come on, unbind, and let me try this mail."

"Nay, nay, Sir Knight, my scheme must yet prevail.

Fight shalt thou not : my soul eschews the chance :
My plan is first thy safety to advance.
On eve of fight three gallant men have sworn
To aid thee 'scaping ere the dawn of morn,
To see thee safely go, to guide thy way
On to the sea. Thou shalt not risk the fray,

For thou art weak from bondage, and unfit,
From long disuse, to try the battle yet !”

“ Aha ! thou fair and good ! but we shall ill,
Unless in fight, the oracle fulfil.”

“ Nay, hear me yet : when thou art safely gone,
Thy armour left a noble Moor shall don ;
With vizor closed throughout the fight he'll range
For thee th' appointed, nor be known the change :
So shall we still our soldiers' fears beguile,
Fulfil their hopes : And thou art safe the while.

“ But be we prompt : the greater risk's at home,
Should queen Zenone from her frenzy come.
But for such bonds that hold her spirit tranced,
Not even thus far our plan had been advanced.
Foiled, struggling pride has brought the fever-stress,
If, half instructed, half I rightly guess :
And thou mightst perish for her wild redress.”

Retired the maid in haste ; and slaves came on,
Unbound the youth, and helped the mail to don.
Accordant bursts were heard the while, without,
Of gong, and brazen drum, and warlike shout.

Then went th' obsequious slaves. The royal
maid,

Returning, saw the manly prince arrayed.
With smile of mute delight, and downcast eyes,
How proud was she his lighter points to tie.
With eager patience Julian stood the while
To watch, to win her soft upturning smile
That shone through tears : He trembled with
delight,

And proud desire for her to dare the fight :—

“ There is, my love, a spirit in this hour,
Which whispers to my crowding heart of power,
Of hope for thee, and peace, young Geraldine,
Triumph, and safe return to win thee mine.

For thee and for another's gentle sake,
My utmost strength shall through the battle break,
To reach Zemberbo's life. Ha! am I here
While breaks her heart with all a mother's fear?
Why, since last moon—could'st guess it Geraldine?
I've seen my mother in this town of thine;
In durance kept to please Zemberbo's will,
Her brother; and ordained his captive still,
Till he——In some low chamber was she found,
With dragon-faces watched and warded round.
Now when I go to fight—to live or die—
Do this for me, young princess, good and high—
I know not where she pines; but, O! for me,
Seek—find—redeem her, make her dwell with thee.
Then if we triumph, and I live, not then
Thy sire shall wish to fetter me again;
But I shall come and ask her from thy care:
And to thy heart she'll aid my love's fond prayer.
But hark! but hark! the trumpet's piercing note
Impatient calls: Come now—be fears forgot.

What more, my love?"

"But this—a moment stay—
Thy will is written down, we'll bring to-day
Thy mother's face—but stay—but only sweat
To shun the fight, dear traitor to our care!
If thou shalt perish"—

"'Tis the holiest cause
E'er drew man's heart to spurn inglorious pause!
So dare we pass thee thus, thou lofty maid,
And tell thee thou must once be discharged,
Yet, yet one word—Beware Zenon's hate!"

"She loves me not, nor loves the Fezzan state,
Nor loves her king. And dark Zemberbo on
Shall cleave our army and confound our throne,
Who never fails! And thou, in thy young life—
Who then was she that sent thee to the strife?
No, no, indeed, thou must not—shalt not fall."

She sobbed—she rushed—she leant upon the wall;

Seized—kissed his broken chain, with many a tear;
Whilst forth he went, and found young Ismael near.
Th' instructed child then took him by the hand,
And led him out with air of grave command,
And met the troops who hailed their future king,
And drew around him in a sable ring,
With shouts renewed to see bold glories rise
In the young beauteous diamonds of his eyes.
Rung was like din the while. Nor less they hailed
Th' appointed captive-saviour brightly mailed.
Then to the camp they led him for the night,
To march with them against the dawning light.

IV.

Lo! now the eastern skies the moon reveal,
To be for night a beauty and a seal.
Her silver coming with the night-wind weaves
The spangled rippling of the cold green leaves
In Fes' royal gardens, watched by one
Whose day of generous care is not yet done.

There lone and silent, with retiring feet
Glides Geraldine within a far retreat
Of arbours cold, and many a mazy lane,
White fountains with bows of silver-threaded rain
Arched to the moon, and bubbling basins cleft,
And marble lovers in their grottoes left.
Why comes not Hassan? Lonely, yet resolved,
She'll watch with him till half the night's revolved;
For she is tasked, before yon moon be high,
To what alone durst generous bosom try.
Slow hours have passed. The moon's cold globe
of light
High-sailing meets the rolling clouds of night.
Lo! far and up within the southern heaven
Old Atlas reels, and from his brow are driven
Clouds, fleecy storms, like white far-streaming hair
Of ancient Bard, or Prophet in his care,
From nightly seat entranced with burdened fire
Upreeing, forth to launch Heaven's vehement ire.

So to the maid, who guessed approaching ills,
Seemed Atlas angry with his heary hills,
A threatening Prophet o'er the Fezzan realm,
Who nodding called on ruin to o'erwhelm.

But there a shadow new ! And now she sees
A glimpsing warrior stealing from the trees.
He met her fast, and kneeled and kissed her feet.

“ Be up, Sir Youth, you come not to entreat,
Or ask a favour ; but a boon to give :
This night be mine a high prerogative.”

Upsprung the gallant form of Hassan's youth :—
“ Thy word, high Princess, binds my soul like truth,
To hear, t'obey, to change not.—O ! thy will,
This hour—for aye—I glory to fulfil ;
For thou art one whose law is honour still.
Now as I hope thy beauteous heart to win,
And sweet forgiveness for my splendid sin

That dares to love thee, name thy wish ; and I
Through dangers all the same shall justify."

" My first demand must gain thy generous heart
To yield a free and unconditioned part.
Yea, in this hour, that honour's law be mine,
To warn thee first this heart can ne'er be thine :
Not, noble Hassan, that my soul believes
Thou'lt grant no boon, when hope no more deceives;
But thou art proud, magnanimous and high,
Nor dares my soul with thee deception try."

" Enough, thou royal maid, and be accursed
The tongue that named its own conditions first !
Yet, O ! forgive ! stern battle comes amain,
And I must go—may see thee ne'er again ;
So burned my heart—Well, thou must then believe
I knelt but sweet forgiveness to receive,
That I so late am come to thy command :
But duty kept me to arrange my band."

“ And duty still must keep thee from the field :
Nay, start not, Hassan ; 'tis thy boon—to yield.
Even I unpractised, can amongst our guards
See disaffection heedless of rewards,
Less curbed by fear : And Axuch, slave sublime,
Who knows men's hearts, has told the dangerous
time.

Oh ! these are days for treasons to be nursed ;
And darker days at hand may make them burst !
If foiled our troops by dark Zemberbo's arms,
Beneath the throne shall start rebellious swarms !”

“ Why then the glorious dawn of morn is near
To search the ill according to thy fear.
This sword, if wished, before my troops move on,
Shall purge the creatures that surround the throne.”

“ Nay, gallant Hassan : 'tis a rooted ill,
Beyond thy reach, and fixed in one deep will,

Not overt yet, but ready forth to spring
And do a work like Azrael's wasting wing.
But unresolved appears that will, and yet
May sleep on its dark powers, by fear beset.
So may it sleep ! And many reasons still
Demand not even to shew we guess the fil.
Then should it menace more, we'll aid that fear
By hints that thou, our loyal hope, art near.
Yet, for a reason, shall such hints be spared ;
The front rebellious if not more declared.
Meanwhile of thee my wish must still demand
To stay from battle with thy bravest band.
Our great black palace, now disused and lone,
Shall lodge thy troops, nor their retreat be known.
There thou with them shalt wait, nor think to move
Till word from me thy rising shall approve.
If dangers threatening press, for thee shall speed
My slave sublime, and to our palace lead :
And thou wilt come, wilt save us and our throne !—
Go—haste, brave youth, for morning comes anon.”

“ By honour mine ! but this may scarcely be ;
Though longs my heart t’obey a maid like thee.
Bright child of honour ! child of duties high !
How shalt thou teach me from the field to fly,
Where most my sword can serve thee ? Shall men
say—

Shall once they think, I shunned the battle-day ?
Nor can they less, thy purpose all concealed,
I lurking here, our gallants in the field.”

“ Still, noble Hassan, have I judged thee right ;
To whom alone I’d blush not for this night.
And how I’ve judged thee guess, when I have dared
T’ appoint this service, though my heart’s declared
Another’s and not thine.—And thou art proud
To hold thy will thy law above the crowd.
High is thy fame : ’tis not for one like thee
With petty cares to fence thy dignity,
Safe in its own simplicity ; but thou
Can’st well afford unto my wish to bow,

To scorn th' invidious whispers of the vain,
And dare be proud, and care not to explain."

" So shall it be : And thou shalt be obeyed :
Thy spirit rules my spirit, noble maid.
Now think not once that I conditions name,
Or dare from duty to presume one claim ;
Yet, yet, sweet princess, say not——O ! unsay
The bitter words !——thy love is given away,
Nor can be mine. And should'st thou send thy slave,
With him be sent thy ring my aid to crave ;
And be it sign my youth is not undone,
O ! precious sign that thou may'st yet be won !
And I shall love thee to my end of life ;
And fence thy brother round from treason's strife,
From bloody thrusts ; and be like dragon's eye,
His life to guard and throne sustained and high."

" Hassan, it cannot——"

“ Lady, then no more :

Behold me ready : hope and life are o'er !

A happier youth shall glory in thy love :

Let me to death my faith and service prove.

Ha ! this is selfish still ; nor kind am I,

Nor manly, thus to move thy sympathy.

Forgive, forgive th' ungenerous and the weak !

I go, young Geraldine, and must not speak.”

He turned, reverting once ; then faster went.

She to her halls her shadowy footsteps bent.

V.

Uprose the sun, and shot his golden slopes

'Slant the high mountains and the forest tops.

From forth the camp, far-stretching by the side

Of Fez' gay river, rushed a mighty tide

Of mingled hosts from various realms, to stem

Zemberbo's treason, and the diadem

Maintain of Abusade : in rank and square
Swarming they join, and for the march prepare.
And now the trumpets blew ; and deep and high
Was filled the compass of war's harmony
Attempered terrible, that thrilling shock
The soldier's bosom, like wind-ruffled book.
Outflew a thousand banners. And the mass
Of moving valour shook the valley pass,
With tread like sounding vaults ensepulchred.
Behind, from the high walls of Fez were heard
Its men to shout, and bid their army on
To conquer for the city and the throne.
So shall they conquer : how shall be subdued
Th' embodied kingdoms' warlike multitude ?
Puffed yellow Copts are here ; and soldiers brave
From Nubian hill and Abyssinian cave.
Th' unshadowed lands, that hear each sultry noon
The thunders 'yond the Mountains of the Moon,
Have sent a few bold men ; but many a swarm
Gives Negroland scarce less the dusk and warm.

Fierce kingdoms on the west to ocean's brink ;
And they whose horses the far waters drink
Of Syrian streams, have men enlisted here.
The warlike Brebers from the hills more near
Of crescent Atlas and the vales between,
The blameless Shelluhs, and the aspects keen
Of mountain Errifi, and Hea's wild castes,
That scream like eagles on the lofty blasts,
March on to battle. Lo ! the army's pride,
The Hentets on their fine-haired horses ride.
And warlike thousands pass from lesser states
Of Atlas southward to the Land of Dates.
From Tremecen, Azogue, Zenhagian, Eloar,
And Heneti, brave tribes that hunt the boar
In shaggy glens of the snow-shiny hills,
Whose glossy globe its southern borders fills,
Or range wild Angab's desert to the banks
Of soft Moluya, fill the Fezzan ranks.
Of tribes inferior many a squadron more,
From guards of Quadres near the northern shore

To hordes dispersed that hear the sounding walls
Of crystal water which from Atlas falls
In many a stream, the onward march now fills,
Forgot the fierce distinction of their hills.

Two days they marched, and on the third were
stayed,
And in a beauteous vale their camp was made.
Beyond it lay, with narrow pass between,
A larger valley, and an equal scene
Of warlike pomp ; for there the traitor host
Of dark Zemberbo kept their evening post,
And hoped the coming morrow to decide
Bold stakes against a king's prescriptive pride.

Of equal hopes the royal bands possessed,
Within their guarded camp took splendid rest.
By Heaven and Earth ! it was a goodly sight,
To see those tents beneath the setting light,

Encircling round with deep pavilioned pale,
A little hill in middle of the vale.
Fair trees, with golden sunlight in their tops,
In leafy tiers grew up its beauteous slopes.
Green was its open summit, and thereon
O'er battle plans the mighty captains shone.
West through the vale delicious lay unrolled
The lapse of rivers in their evening gold ;
And far along their sun-illumined banks,
Broke the quick restless gleam of warlike ranks.
North, where the hills arose by soft degrees,
Stood stately warriors in the myrtle trees,
And fed their beauteous steeds. From east to
south
Armed files stood onward to the valley's mouth.
From out the tents the while, and round the plain,
Bold music burst defiance to maintain,
And hope against the morrow's dawning hour.
Nor the gay camp belied th' inspiring power :

From white-teethed tribes, that loitered on the
grass,

Loud laughter burst, fierce jests were heard to pass;

Around the tents were poured the gorgeous
throngs

Of nations blent, with shouts and warlike songs:

Nor ceased the din as o'er th' encampment wide,

Fell softly dark that eve of summer-tide.

VI.

Night passed. Came morn and saw the royal
host

In gleaming ferment, like a sea far-tossed.

Till burst the summons of the rolling drum,

And sternly told th' appointed hour was come ;

And wailed the trumpet, and the deep-smote gong

Quelled to the draining march the closing throng.

First moved a phalanx through the strait defile

Betwixt the valleys ; and in midst, the while,

Went Julian on with kindled soul and high,
To do good service or to bravely die ;
For he by night had scorned to flee from war
With those whom Geraldine bade guide him far.
Advanced the royal column, firm and slow—
But see ! but see ! the far-embattled foe !
Zemberbo's host how gloriously revealed !
From side to side the levied valley reeled
With restless gleams.

The mutual armies seen,
Fierce shouts arose, and claimed the space between.
Paused not the royal phalanx : On each hand
Hung cloudy swarms, whence ranging in a band,
The stepping archers, with their pause compressed,
Let loose the glancing arrows from their breast.
Nor less from rebel bows the arrowy rain
Dark on th' advancing squadron fell amain,
On the thronged pass, as on a focus, fell ;
Yet forth that phalanx traversed firm and well,

Forward, received into the perilous bay
Of serried crescent sharpening round away,
Till curling to the phalanx' flanks it turns,
And, turning, bores them with its piercing horns.
Yet, forward still, still onward through the fight,
That column poured its firm continuous might,
Which widening grew, and spread a breastwork far
Across the plain, and mingled deep the war.

Far in his vale retired, to shepherd's ear,
The warlike tumult unprepared to hear,
The ghosted airy sound of battle booms
High up through Echo's dim confused rooms,
In chambered range around the rocky hills.
O'er mountains fast he climbs, for wonder fills
His bounding heart: He stands above the dale
Filled with wild war; but boiling clouds prevail,
And hide the shock, and leave him but to guess
What means within the loud and fierce excess;

Till, when in lightened flaws has burst the shroud,
Thronged shapes he sees throughout th' empeopled
cloud,

Careering men, and horses' tossing manes,
And knows dread war, and fears, and seeks his
plains.

But what within? Stern work was in that cloud,
Stark thrusts of death, and steeds and warriors
bowed,

And strewed around, a thousand swords of strife
Drunk with red vintage of man's costly life.
In shearings from the lofty helmets cast,
Proud plumes were driven like smoke along the
blast

Of wind unnatural, from the strife that grew
Of arms, and through the havock shrilly blew.

Now stretched its struggling limbs the battle wide
Far through the valley's outlets on each side ;

Now backward drew from each ensanguined pass,
Like wounded thing, to guard the vital mass
That filled the plain, where, faster as men failed,
Grim, closing, locked, the mortal shock prevailed.

In danger's van, and girt with thousands brave,
Who followed him ordained a realm to save,
Fought Julian long, and still Zemberbo sought ;
Empierced at length the throng wherein he fought,
And saw the mighty creature in his strength,
And saw his sweeping scymitar of length,
His face, as far he bounded to destroy,
Bright with the sunshine of his warlike joy.
Yet, nathless, Julian strove to stay his path,
To beat him down with swiftest strokes of wrath ;
But failed, was mastered, and within the hour
Lay in a tent beneath Zemberbo's power.

Where now the promise of the oracle ?
For Julian captured was a broken spell :

And fear, for hope, fast seized the royal host;
They paused, they wavered, turned, fled : All was
lost.

A summer's day had toiled the fight in doubt;
With sunset came the Terror and the Rout.
And far Zemberke's sword the battle gleaned,
Till weary stragglers blessed the night that screened. .

VII.

Young Geraldine has won a holy joy,
Which years, nor death, nor aught shall e'er
destroy,
So to have loved, and so redeemed her knight.
Yet, yet, how dim to her that morning's light
Which saw him go from Fez ! she thought of him,
So gone, and wept till her young eyes were dim.
And thought of war : She knew her wish was vain,
And charge, that he from battle should refrain.

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Hope saw him far career with fierce delight
Throughout the shining turbulence of fight.
Came Fear—she shuddered o'er the stroke of war.
And Hope and Fear, together, rushed afar,
And sought him, found him, bound his bleeding
breast,
And heard him bless her to his dreamless rest.

With heart collapsed throughout the day she
sate
In a dull hall. Around, in pensive state
Her little sisters softly walked, and he,
Her brother, Ismael, leaned upon her knee,
Upturned his glossy eyes, and asked her care,
While softly toyed she with his curly hair;
Till dimmed her eye, and, stooping to his head,
She pressed it softly with her beauteous lid,
And crushed to bitter spray the rising tear,
To hide it from his wondering childish fear.

Then turned she to his face, put by his hair,
Long read his brow so smooth, so darkly fair,
Looked down into his black eyes :—" Beauteous
child,

No sin is in those young wells undefiled !

Why shouldst thou perish then? But no, my
boy ;

Our God will save my golden-headed joy !

My blessing on those eyes so bold and bright,

For thou shalt live and be a gallant knight,

To fight for me, and for thy sisters all,

And save us from the dark oppressor's thrall !

But England's men thou'lt love, high hold thy face,

And stately walk like her majestic race,

Whom longs my soul to see—but ne'er shall see :

Oh ! never in my mother's land I'll be,

For which afar I look at eventide,

But I shall teach thee well her thoughts of pride,

All-loved for her who gave a mother's life

To bring thee forth into this world of strife,

Thou precious purchase dear ! O ! I would make
Thy soul a beauty for her beauteous sake !
O ! well and best I love thee, and would save,
Wert but for her within her dusty grave !”

Slew passed the hours. Then stood young Ger-
aldine

On her high palace at the day's decline,
And strained her lovely eyes to northward far,
And hoped and feared for the returning war.
Each eve, the same. On sixth revolving night
Since went the royal squadrons to the fight,
She stood upon the roof and long looked forth
To hills now bright, now purpling on the north.
She saw like shadows when the clouds are chased,
Men from the mountains coming down in haste.
Behind in Fez a buzzing murmur rose,
Like as of men presentiment of their woes ;
For there's a sharpness, not of ear or eye,
Which tells to waiting realms destruction nigh,

A sense prophetic. Not one fugitive
Had yet come in the evil news to give ;
Yet seemed o'er Fez the air instinct with ills,
Seemed running whispers over all her hills.
To cries of fear they waxed : And crowds amain
Stood on their roofs and looked unto the plain,
There ! come they now, in straggling disarray,
The weary remnant of some fatal day.
Far bends the rider o'er his staggering steed,
And scarcely seems th' expected walls to heed,
Scarce lifts his feeble eyes : Each man, alone
In deep unsocial stress of mind comes on.

Now from their house tops rushed a thousand
down
To hail the weary to their friendly town,
With anxious hearts to look—to wait—to long—
To ask their friends from the returning throng.

Still stood the princess Geraldine, and viewed
With dizzy eyes the thickening multitude,
And many a wish and many a fear revolved,
Yet dared not turn to ask and be resolved.
Came Axuch, slave sublime ; she shook her head,
And mutely pointed to the valley spread
With straggling troops ; nor heard his kind reproof,
But waved him off, and would not leave the roof.
Slow hours revolved, and forth along the sky
The stars came flushing from eternity,
And darkness fell and hid the weary plain,
But yet she turned not from her trance of pain.
She stood, O God ! to list the coming war :
And heard wild music in the hills afar.
O'er cries oft breaking from the valley near,
Continuous, swelling, came that strain of fear.
It ceased : How throbbed her bosom, half-relieved
To think her ear had haply been deceived !
But oh ! yon moving lights ! and oh ! the tread
Of marching squadrons, deep, concentrated !

And hark ! those tinklings, as the light winds swell,
The coming-on of cavalry now tell,
Heard through the restless night. Again—again !
Now near outbursts that fierce triumphant strain,
With wild relief of mournful cadences
That wail away upon the fitful breeze !

Down by Ramela's waves that slippery shone
To ruddy lights, the shadowy war came on.
Now dies the music. Now of fierce command
Voices distinct attest the foe at hand,
Heard round from post to post. The points of
light
Glance to and fro, and widen through the night.
The mighty tread is fused to swarming din
Of men who nightly bivouack begin.
“ Behold Zemberbo's camp ! ” wild shrieked the
maid,
And to her chamber flitted through the shade.

END OF CANTO III.

THE
CAPTIVE OF FEZ.
CANTO IV.

THE
CAPTIVE OF FEZ.

CANTO IV.

**Come to her palace in this hour of night,
And see Zenone, in her cloud of white !
Pale sits the Beauty, sad and silent all,
And looks th' embodied Genius of the hall,
Whose dazzling lights but blueely seem to plate
The deep dull shadow of its lonely state.**

**Came Melki, knelt, and kissed her silken feet,
Raised back his withered brow her eye to meet,**

Then seized her beauteous hand—She started :—

“ Slave—

Why Melki—creature faithful as the grave !

What wouldst thou have ? I judge thee so to be—

But nothing, nothing canst thou do for me !

Why com'st thou then ? Away, I love thee not,

Nor much have done to raise thy luckless lot ?”

“ Italian flower !” upstarting said the slave,

“ The land that gave me birth thy beauty gave.

And thou shalt be my queen magnificent :

Like bow, to serve thee, is my spirit bent.”

“ Oh ! Italy, indeed !—Why here's a king—

If thou wilt serve me, to the dust him bring !

Perish this Abusade ! With his swart host

He came by moonlight o'er our white sea-coast,

And forced me with my father o'er the wave,

And brought me to this land to be a slave ;

Then when that father scorned him and abhorred,
He dared to give his bosom to the sword !
But thinkst thou not, one wish—one prayer for
power,
My spirit grew, t' avenge that bloody hour ?
Why yet avenged not ? Was that spirit tamed
Because he owned him of his deed ashamed ?
Because in later days he made me queen ?
No, no,—I hold the title but to screen
My swelling hate, so long, so darkly nursed,
That with confusion wide it may outburst,
His life destroy, his house, his throne o'erwhelm,
And crush this black and unbaptised realm ?
Thou know'st me now. Be bold."

" Those guards I've tried,
And found them prompt to range upon thy side ;
So thou wilt join Zemberbo, for 'tis known,
As if Heaven-told, that he shall mount this throne."

"Ha! sayst thou? Now when we the tyrant slay,
Through these grim gates canst thou make sure
our way?"

Then give them to Zemberbo? Ere that time,
Canst thou forewarn him of our purposed—crime?
Well, grant the term. What then? and whither
go?"

"To sunbright Italy, the land"——

"No, No!

How could I thither? Name it not again,
Unless thou dar'st to give me boundless pain!
In that fair land, first lightened on my eyes
The suns of summer from the crystal skies.
The breathing hills that nod with tufted woods,
The valleys shining with the glassy floods,
The green leaves trembling to the nightingale,
And heaven's high starry lamps that never fail,
And all the solemn beauty of the night,
Which tongue of man has never told aright,

There touched me first; and there my kindred lie—
Is this a monstrous dream? where, where am I?
With flowers of sleep me crown, with poppy tops,
My spirit drowse with Lethe's dullest sops;
If in an alien land, a land of slaves,
Where men dare scarcely creep into their graves,
Without the tyrant's smile to light them on,
I bow, the slave supreme, before his throne!
O! bright pre-eminence! O! glorious days!
Joy to the queen-slave!"

 "Thy heart to raise,
I swear to help thee to atonement high."
"Thou meanest form! thou worthy scarce to die!
What is it all that thou for me canst do?
Will it repay me, glorify me too?
Why, even a child, I deemed immortal power
Was due by Nature as my spirit's dower;
And longed to be a boundless witch, to know
The hoary wonders of the worlds below,

To catch th' implicit lightnings through the rack
Of thunder-clouds careering bold and black,
To haunt the fires and floods, to yoke the Winds,
And see the kingdoms of immortal minds.
Ha ! Hell might laugh, and Tongues of Blasphemy
Take up the jest, and ask now what am I ?
How far beneath those early daring aims !
The daughter I of Earth's profoundest shames !
Bless my bright course ! Oh ! feel ! poor subject
one !

A tyrant's jest ! a—life, heart cease—be done !"
With fearful agony her breast she beat,
And flung herself upon her silken seat,
Tore her bright hair, and sobbed ; and through her
frame,
Like pangs immortal, fits of trembling came.

Then Melki knelt and dared to take her hand :—
“ Queen be thyself—rise—give me proud com-
mand.”

Upstarts the Queen, imperial fire appears,
Burns on her cheek, and drinks her glistening tears.
“ Slave !” cried she shuddering, stamping with her
foot,
“ Hast thou presumed? Be up—be gone—be mute !
Art thou a king riding on horses white,
That thou hast dared to bid me peace this night ?
I cry thee mercy ! ha ! thou art my slave ?
Now I have wronged thee ; give me to my grave :
Haste, gain a right my softened heart to see :
Make thyself something by betraying me.
Yea, why should one like thee be faithful now ?
Kill me : be kinder than the Fever thou,
That lighted o’er my life its dog-star swart,
But set and deigned not to consume this heart.
Would Time were dead, and buried were the Sun !”

“ Thou Queen—my Queen ! our plans shall be
undone,

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If thus you talk with wild indifference.

Bear I not then your steadfast warrant hence ?”

“ Slave, slave, come solve this weary dream of
life !

Of joy and pain, strange intertissued strife !
Would I could lose this being, and were clear
To wander glimpsing with the moon’s swift sphere !
To hunt unconscious, free from life’s strange moods,
In thin white silence in the shadowy woods !”

“ Yet, Queen—”

“ How it can joy a wretch like thee
One day to live, one hour, I cannot see.
Get thee to some numb cave, there die away ;
Yet smile in death to think so fall the gay,
The proud so perish, Love itself so dies,
And great Ambition with the lifted eyes,
And hearts that flame with hues of poetry ;
Their glory quenched, their life a saddened lie.

' O ! these are they, with grand immortal cares !'
So runs the brag, ' What honour's like to theirs,—
The proud, the pure, the Heaven-endowed to raise
The young religion of man's primal days,
When Virtue was an ardour, not a thing
To wait on Habit for a tutored wing ?
Men of the high awakened hearts, who hold
Yet sleepless triumphs of their thoughts untold ?'
Even these must bow to count ignoble gains,
Not even to glory in exalted pains ;
For things of sense can lure, and low desire
Train to base stoop their privilege of fire.
Boast not th' impassioned life, the flame within,
While sin's at hand, and passion goads to sin.
Then if the creature fall, his lofty name
Oft but ensures continuance of his shame :
He wrongs his spirit's proud virginity,
And deems his glory can no farther die.
Then shall wild pleasures have him, and be vain
The vaunted power of Reason to restrain.

Tumultuous cravings, fierce delirious joy,
The curb of Awe and Reason shall destroy,
Shall bear his heart, like homeless orb of air,
Through sin's ecliptic, downward to despair!
Then, then, his glorious intellectual mind,
Sickened with turbid impulse, dies behind;
Or tracks the desperate race but to maintain,
Like lightning o'er the night-steed's tossing mane,
Its fitful wreath of coruscations bright,
Contrast and challenge o'er the darkening fight;
Or holds yet proud unbroken parallel,
To beautify a spirit down to Hell.
What then is life, if thus the goodliest fall?
Cease my vexed soul, 'tis vain delusion all!"

"So give us active joys, nor let us waste
In dreams our hearts, but plan and do in haste."

**“ Ha ! think’st thou, slave, that aught shall make
me miss**

The only triumph that can be my bliss ?

No : I shall come before a nation’s eyes,

And Fex may curse me—she shall ne’er despise.

I to her painted roll my name refuse,

Of spotted harlots in these silken stews ;

Yet shall that name in Fex be ne’er forgot,

But stamp her annals with a burning blot.

Come on, Zemberbo, thou art linked with me ;

Careering twins in vengeance shall we be !

Hark, there ! is that the tumult of his wars ?

Melki, look forth unto the eastern stars.

No : ’tis the wind that sings its wildest staves,

Like spirits howling in their stony caves.”

“ Shall I look forth ?”

“ Ha ! worm, thou wouldst away

To rouse a monarch, and thy Queen betray ?

No, no, I wrong thee. I am ill at rest,
A blind and shapeless burden weighs my breast !
I know—I know the great presentiment.
O ! we must haste—must speed while life is lent.”

“ My Queen Zenone”—

“ Hear me yet: When I
Have gained my triumph, and have bowed to die—
As soon I must—if thou shalt me survive,
To win my heart from clay, Italian, strive.
And thou shalt flee from out this sable land,
And bear it like a treasure in thy hand,
And in the hour of midnight shalt thou throw
The little gift to Etna's fiery flow ;
So the bright haunts shall be my burial-place,
Nor my heart rot like man's ignoble race !
Swear—swear.”

“ I swear, so strength be given to me.”

“ Now thy reward—most mighty shall it be :

All jewel-stones from Indian mountains won,
 The blazing children of the flaming Sun,
 Are in my gift, and shall be thine to pay
 Thy faith to me,—still costlier far than they :
 So do I prize thy duty and thy love
 The thrones and sceptres of the earth above :
 So would I deem th' Archangels' crowns but slight
 To give to him who serves my soul aright !
 Retire."

The Eunuch went. In lonely state, . .
 Absorbed in thought, the Queen, Zenone sate.

II.

Then Melki came anew :—" Rise, opal Queen !
 Up ! let the glory of thy light be seen !
 Triumphant reign ! bow down thy foes ! This hour
 Again has placed that captive in thy power :
 He comes some new conditions to unfold,
 Or press new threatenings from Zemberbo bold.

Meanwhile, I've dared of thee, my Queen, to judge,
That thou against him bear'st a haughty grudge.
So in a secret chamber now confined,
He waits the purpose of thy angry mind.
And, hark ! I've whispered to our nightly guards
Of treasons prompt, and fears, and high rewards."

As from the cloud the lightning's nimble glance
Startles the forest from its midnight trance,
Upsprung the pale Sultana at the word,
Which told the captive to her power restored.
And passion's flaming linstock fired her brow,
And gleamed her eye as from a fearless vow,
And o'er her cheek red floods of kindled life
Steeped the wan pearls.

" O ! night of daring strife !
Bright Melki ! hark ! come near : This is the night
To slay a king, and triumph in our might.
And then, sweet Geraldine ! may I not speed
To make thee think that Julian did the deed ?

New glorious arts maintain your mother-queen!
Wild drops and philters have my children been;
Their steaming births have charmed my childless
days,

And nights delighted with my strange assays,—
Taught by that Santon with his visage foul,
Blood of the wilderness! that twinkling owl
Who looks through darkness of our palaces:
For gold his wisdom have I won with ease,—
Each subtlest mode to blot the life away
By draught or tainted steel, against a day—
That day is come! Wears not the youth a sword?
Shalt lightly oint it with my gums abhorred.
Thus armed, let him be near. The tyrant next
Rouse—arm—bring on with jealous fear's pretext,
And I shall scream as if from death at hand,
And win the youth in my defence to stand;
And on his sword shall rush the ireful king,
Whose blood my poison thus may speed to sting:

One touch is death. Ho! come and see him lie!
Nor can the youth his slaughtering sword deny.
But should the tyrant press, his blood shall feel,
Behind, my poniard of envenomed steel.
And shall not this be mighty good when she—
When Geraldine, the bloody work shall see?
For I shall haste—shall ask—shall draw her in;
And bid her look—and point her lover's sin:
And she shall see him with his naked sword,
Compelling witness, o'er the deed abhorred;
Shall more than guess his guilt, when she shall hear
Our guards, as King of Fez, this Julian cheer,—
Zemberbo's kinsman who has willed it so,
And sent him on to strike forestalling blow.
So, Melki, thou meanwhile shalt notice send
To dark Zemberbo of the monarch's end,
And bid him stand prepared;—so still thy power
Can ope the city gates in midnight hour,
And send us forth;—so earlier thou canst bring
Those rebel guards to hail this captive king.

Now hear me, now:—When Geraldine shall see
Thus Julian stand, and faint and trembling be;
My spiced and precious chalice shall be near,
And on her heart shall pour its draught of fear,
Die shall she not: But, armed with drowsy strife,
My glorious liquor 'gainst her powers of life
Shall hold pale quarrel at the heart's red gates,
And turn the cordial blood to dull dark fates.
So through her dream of life her soul shall feed
The black belief of Julian's bloody deed.

Thus have I shewn thee, to enlarge thy heart
And make thee bold the wonders of my art,
Come on and follow me, my secret hall
Shall more instruct thee in thy duties all."

III.

Next hour in a bright room saw Julian wait,
By Melki left, his embassy to state

When forth should come the monarch. Came the
while

The Pearl of Italy, like glimpsing guile,—
So soft Zenone's coming. But her eye
Through shade of sorrow looked resolved and high.
She paced the chamber, by the captive shot
With gleaming haste, yet deigned to mark him not.
Then sate she on her silken couch, and took
Her harp of golden wires that thrilling shook
With bold defiance, till the strain was changed,
And 'gan to mourn as if for love estranged.
Soon checked—for lo! the angry Abusade,
Reeling and red, comes on with glittering blade.
“Sweet minion—ha! of love?” gnashing he cried.
Rose, screamed, and fled the Queen to Julian's side,
And prayed his help, and won his generous sword
To gleam defensive 'gainst her angry lord.
And headlong came the King in wine and ire,
With mortal thrusts, and made the youth retire

•

With wary fence, till, chafed to angry mood,
He dealt a blow and reached the monarch's blood.
Down drops the tyrant's sword vindictive ; fast
His rolling bulk upon the floor is cast ;
And o'er his face his writhen muscles start
With fearful spasms, which own the curdled heart ;
And grasp his hands with clenching agony ;
Till Death's cold glassy ghost glares in his eye.

Meanwhile the Queen has found young Geraldine,
And thus pursues th' alarms of her design :—
“ Rise, Princess, come ! be mutual wrongs forget
For new communion in some fearful lot.
O ! silly speckled birds ! we twain are met
In the black meshes of Zemberbo's net !
Cry,—Treason ! Treason ! for our sable foe
Has won our guards a foul revolt to shew,
With this strange circumstance that he, who late
Our fetters bore, now dares affront our state,

Our very palace ; and this night has won
Our guards to hail him——Oh ! our days are
done !—

Why, him—this Julian—him, the Fezzan King,
Because beneath his sooty kinsman's wing
His heart is impeded : And vengeance he demands
Against our court which gave him to these bands.
All this, it seems, is ordered to fulfil,
In strange extremes, his friend Zemberbo's will.
Come fast—be up, young Geraldine—O ! speak :
What now—shall now be done for us the weak ?
List to these shouts !—Now hold—prepare thy
heart ;

For wilder tidings I must yet impart :
Come to me near——Oh ! as I left the hall,
I saw our King—thy sire—by Julian fall.”

“ God on his throne of mercy !—Where art thou
My child, my Ismael ? Go not from me now !—

I see thee Queen ; but have I heard thee right ?
Or thrill my ears but to the winds of night ?
What said'st thou ? Never, never ! Oh ! no—no !
My heart shall ne'er believe it dares be so !
My Queen Zenone, still thy frame is weak,
And visions of the night have made thee sick,
Have made thee leave thy couch : My Queen dis-
tressed,
Come, let me lead thee softly to thy rest.
O ! God ! that shout ! what means it ? yet again !
And Axuch too, upon his bed of pain—
Of death !—Speak, Queen of Fez : what shall be
done ?
Shall we the danger face, or shall we shun ?
Why doubt'st thou, O ! my heart ! My Queen
you told
Of youthful regicide ? Let me behold—
Lead on that I may see him !”
And her hand
Zenone took with air of proud command,

Refrained not from her hate's imperious mood,
But fiercely dragged her to the hall of blood.
There lay her sire!—She saw young Julian first,
Lean on his sword above the deed accursed;
And heard—to her a hollow deafening sound—
These traitorous greetings from the guards
around :—

“ Hail—hail! King Julian, great Zemberbo's
heir !”

“ Behold me, sir !” she cried with bold despair.

And Julian heard his Geraldine, and fast
His eye was raised, then to the body cast,
Then raised again ; again he bent his head,
And mutely pointed to the kingly dead.

But from the princess, now the subtle Queen
Beseeched those guards the slaughtered king, to
screen.

And quickly Melki saw his Queen's design,
Which sought to draw a prompt determined line
Betwixt the princess and the captive knight,
Nor give him leave to state his deed aright.
And round th' unseemly corse the eunuch drew,
And round the regicide, his rebel crew,
And hid him from the princess.

Turned the maid

With wildered haste, as if to shriek for aid ;
And saw old Axuch from his bed of pain
Roused by those shouts, her safety to maintain.
In garb of night he came ; the fever-streak
Burnished, yet broken, o'er his furrowed cheek ;
Pale was his lofty forehead, and thereon
The solemn seal of worlds eternal shone.
“ My child,” he said, “ my princess, is not this
Th' appointed hour of peace and slumber's bliss ?
What evil then so beats about the night
With dragon-wings of tumult and affright ? ”

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“O! Axuch,” cried the princess, “art thou too
Come the strange horrors of this night to view?!!
Come with thy frail joints from the bed of death:
T’ unlearn thy trust in man’s young heart of faith?
Oh! come not! Take this ring,—one token small,
That I have found thee kind and faithful all:
Nought else is left me now. Away—away!
You know its worth and use—make no delay.
Dare not to look: ’tis blood; and will offend
Thy fond old eyes, and plague thy coming end.
Go, seek thy couch; if strength thou lack’st to
bring
One draught of water from th’ appointed spring.
But none, save thee, I have: O! fast—go fast;
And let this bitterness of thirst be past!”

Awhile the old man stood with mournful look
Bent on his princess, ere the ring he took;
Then kissed her hand, and from the chamber went
With mustered strength as if for great intent.

Long stood the princess, followed with her eye
His going, turned not, looked resolved and high,
Like one dilating in her sorrow's pride
To be a martyr greatly self-denied.

Now Asuch may be far : Boldly she turned,
As if her heart for holy issue burned :—
“ Thus o'er his deed, thus in his presence, best
My heart's indignant ire shall be expressed.
Oh ! if—Oh ! fearful thought ! what have I done ?
Call back—No, no : the course must now be run.
Yet Julian ! Julian ! 'tis not one short moon”—
She shrieked, and sunk into a bloodless swoon.

Upstart'd Julian from his stony dream,
Burst through that grim ring to the princess'
scream,
Upraised her, bore her to a couch, and cried
For cordial waters : By the Queen supplied,
Her shining ready cup he seized in haste,
And to the maid reviving held to taste.

Silent, serene, with pale and mournful look
On Julian fixed, the fatal cup she took ;
She firmly drank. But rushed upon his soul
A fear instinctive of the deadly bowl,
And down he dashed it from her hand—too late !
“ So, so,” she said, “ it is a cup of fate ?
Such thou hast now confessed it in thy will
But half-sustained thy purpose to fulfil ?
I thought of poison from that cup so near ;
Yet dared to honour thee above my fear :
Because——O ! Julian ! Could I—could I think
Thou—thou !—wouldst joy to give me death to
drink ?
Thou who——But ha ! this weakness shall be o’er :
Foul regicide, I scorn thee and abhor !”
And trembling shook her frame. The captive
youth
Essayed to speak—to ask—to learn the truth—
To spurn her wild belief.

But now a shout
And din of clashing arms are heard without,
Alarms and cries of death. The turbulence
Has burst the palace, and its guarded fence,
So loud it rages—nearing still !

Grim stood
Those traitors in determined attitude,
And Melki at their head. With sword in hand
Before the princess Julian took his stand,
If foes were near, from danger her to guard ;
While longed his soul as for a great reward,
To die for her—to blot her thought away,
Her sire, herself, that he had wished to slay.

Zenone now ! Lo ! fired by these alarms
Her pale and spiritual beauty's up in arms ;
And o'er her face the varying passions pass
In flamings, like a chemist's kindled glass.
But failed her prouder gleams, and quailed her eye,
To see come on young Hassan bold and high,

Whose loyal life was pledge that she was lost.

Behind him came through blood his crowding
host,—

Nor here opposed not : “ Hew the traitors fast ! ”

Young Hassan shouts. But “ Meet them to the
last ! ”

Was Melki's cry : And in the van he crossed

The blade of Hassan, bravest of his host.

And o'er the billows of his wrinkled front

Rode, tilting, bold resolve : He stood the brunt,

Till through his vitals passed the warrior's sword,

And o'er the hilt his gurgling blood was poured.

With yells the eunuch felt the thorough death,

And writhed to bite the blade ; yet, firm in faith

To her his Queen, the hilt his clenching hand

Fast held, that thus her foe unarmed might stand.

So Hassan stood ; nor could his sword perform

—Cloyed with wild writhing of the wrinkled worm—

Its farther work, till, won by force at length,

Anew around it sped its wasting strength.

Meanwhile the slave was down amidst his blood ;
Yet turned his eye to where Zenone stood ;
Nor yet his faith—his love—his service o'er,
His wounded frame he dragged across the floor,
And reached his Queen, and smiled with loyal pride,
And kissed her feet convulsively, and died.

Now round in bloody heaps the rebels laid,
A horrid pause red panting slaughter made,
And Hassan turned to Geraldine, who stood
To Julian pointing in commanding mood :
Came Hassan near :—" My beauteous bride de-
clare"—

" Behold the regicide—beheld him there !"
Trembling she cried with fearful energy,
To Julian pointing still, " Slay—he must die."

" Come on, sir Youth," said Hassan.

"Hear me first,"

The captive cried.

**"Ay, when my sabre's thirst
Has drunk thy heart," was Hassan's fierce reply,
"And not till then."**

**And to his menace high
Quick sped his sword accordant :—"Back—away—
Off, guards," he farther cried, "This knight's my
prey."**

**And onward pressed he. But the captive now,
Thus challenged, met him with undaunted brow.
And starkly fought they round the bloody ring,
Till Julian stumbled o'er the slaughtered king.
"Behold the murderer by his deeds betrayed,"
Cried Hassan, following with his greedy blade.
But "Hold!" Zenone cried, and rushed between ;
And gave her bosom for the prince a screen,
Kept Hassan back :—"Spare—spare ! Alone am I
The guilty one : This young prince must not die.**

'Twas I that slew that tyrant." And she raised
Proudly her foot upon his neck abased,
And towered in dreadful beauty unabashed.
" 'Twas I—'twas I, that to the dust him dashed.
And who, save I, Zemberbo roused to place
A sovereign here above the tyrant's race ?
O ! greatly, brightly is my heart atoned !
No boy of his shall ever here be throned.
Nor she—thou precious princess ! thou shalt ne'er,
Where I have loved, the saffron honours wear.
The blood-compelling Genius of my cup
Down to the dregs shall drink thy clear life up.
Now of this prince :—to shield me with his sword,
Nobly he stood against a King abhorred.
But gummy chrism of mine had smeared his blade,
Whose touch the tyrant's heart black ashes made.
Rejoicing I explain : with boundless joy
I take the blame, to save this princely boy.
Be up, mine own—my won ! and to her tell,
Zenone gladly died to shield thee well.

And if, beyond this life, there be again
For man a life of gladness or of pain ;
There re-established, if we be the same,
Earth's memories still shall haunt our spiritual
frame :

O ! then——rise Julian !——know that from thy
heart,

The thought how I redeemed thee ne'er shall part :
How proud above the thought of her who dared
Believe thy soul my bloody quarrel shared !
And if thou blame me much, O ! think——O ! think
That I have loved thee to destruction's brink !
Now let me kiss thy wounds, and I will go
Nor plague thee more !" And in th' impassioned
wo

Of hopeless love, she sprung——she wildly kissed
The captive's forehead, and his bleeding breast.

Then round her Hassan drew his guards, and
bade

The beauteous murderess be to ward conveyed.
She smiled ; with glance of pride magnificent
She eyed her victims as she guarded went.
And lo ! wild emblem of her passionate mood,
Her forehead pale is stained with Julian's blood.

And he is guiltless ? O ! the thought is blest ;
Yet full of wo—despair—to one sweet breast !
One good mistaken heart ! Young Geraldine,
Thine is the sorrow, for that heart is thine.
She sees him look for her, advance : he tries
To speak, but words his heaving breast denies.
He stands with the indignant glory crowned
Of honour doubted—tried—triumphant found :
And through his tears his look was proud and high ;
But soon shone love, all-softening, in his eye :—

“ And grieve not thou, my Geraldine”——

“ Ha! no,

I dare not hear thee : swiftly, swiftly go,
Nor see me more : Curse me, and then far flee :
Behold me Hassan's bride—nought now to thee !
Go, go—I am not worthy—Oh ! dread night !
Kill me, sweet Prince, nor let me bear thy sight !”

With fearful gaze awhile the captive stood,
In sorrow's tearless, dumb, concentrated mood.
One quick despairing gesture from him broke ;
Then reeling round to Hassan thus he spoke :—
“ To thee, Sir Hassan—now that princess' lord,—
Since slain the King, must be addressed my word :
Zemberbo sends proud terms ; he threats to slay,
Or fling to far captivity away,
Each royal child, if on the morn ye still
Maintain your gates against his haughty will.
Yet bravely stand—fight—yield not ; I have heard
Morocco's king prepares a mighty guard

To help your city, since your messenger
Was secret sent his royal fears to stir,—
Since dark Zemberbo once he dared to wrong,
Whose oath was prompt of vengeance sure and
strong :

So knows the monarch ; and has deemed it now
Best time to check him, nor his growth allow.
Now, as thou'rt soldier, guard me forth from ill,
That I returning may my oath fulfil."

" O ! he has done the lofty Roman part,
I know it well, and given to death his heart
For us," cried Geraldine, " for me—for me,
Whose broken vow my gratitude must be !
O ! Julian—Julian ! we must perish both !
But go not thou—O ! go not to thy oath !
Come near with all thy wounds !"

Her vest she tore
To bind his hurts—shrieked—sunk upon the floor.

One look! in stern composure Julian went
With guards that Hassan for his safety sent.

“Hence, Omri, haste,” cried Hassan, “heed not
thou

Observance, rule—the hour will not allow—
Thorough the palace search; be handmaids brought
To bear this princess to her couch remote.

“Go Muley Moloch thou, and make report,
How kept the gates and purlieus of the court.
As on we came, we sent a chosen band
To watch those traitors and the walls command:
See how 'tis done. Sure morning now is near.
With strict reform this palace must we clear.
Ere noon a queen—yon beauteous bloody thing!—
Shall give her white neck to th' avenging string.”

IV.

Now to declare his mission, Julian stands
Before Zemberbo, who each point demands :
And, sworn 't unfold the truth, the truth he states,
And last to Hassan his advice relates.
“ Dread Allah ! you have dared ? ” The Chief ex-
claimed,
“ Have dashed my purpose, to your wishes framed ?
Though, too, your loves in yonder court I knew,
And deemed my terms might best be sped by you,
My bright ambassador ! 'Tis worth a smile !
But deign to guess thy great reward the while ! ”

“ Why doubtless death,” returned the youth, as
high

He stood, and braved the warrior's lowering eye.
But know, swart Chief, thy vengeful hope's bereft,
For but the fragments of my life are left.
Yet come—devise—doom—win a little part,
To feed the famished vultures of thy heart.”

“ Yea comes my last temptation, and shall hold
Dread controversy with thy spirit bold.
But if it fail, and if that spirit still
Be stout—maintain itself against my will,
Which stoops to give the terms of life ; a doom
Awaits thee, sadder than the idle tomb :
This well thou know’st to brave ; but that to hear
Shall make thee shudder to thy tingling ear.”
Thus menaced th’ Afric Chief ; then gave command,
And from their cloudy tents forth rushed his band
Of giant guards, dusk, gleaming to the moon,
That westward shot, now far beyond her noon.
In rank prolonged they stood, a lofty pale
Of living valour never known to quail.
“ Bring forth my battle-horse,” the chieftain cried,
High-towering, swelling in his large-souled pride.
Forth came the steed,—from Araby a gift,
White as the snows, and as the breezes swift.

In youth on Yemen's golden barley fed,
In size and beauty grew the desert-bred
Fit present for Zemberbo. Ne'er at rest,
High leap the muscles of his groaning chest.
His thin red nostrils, as from scornful thought,
Restless dilate, and smoke like seething pot.
And lo ! as if he tarried at the wine,
His fierce eyes, like sun-kindled rubies, shine.
" Good horse, Zohawk !" And on him bounding
sate

The master-chief ; bade Julian guarded wait ;
Dashed on, and far along the mighty line
That round came sharpening to the crescent's sign,
Still inward curling till its tips were met,
And formed a circle round the captive set.
What means this pomp ? would dark Zemberbo
show

His warlike grandeur to some honoured foe ?
He caused his trump be blown, and at the blast
O'er all the hills of Fez shrill echoes passed ;

N

And from the city came the piercing wail
Of answering trumpet on the high cold gale.
He heard, but heeded not : his warlike note
Was meant a signal to his tents remote.
And straightway in his camp's far skirts arose
Music's defiance, as against his foes.
And up the valley came a gleaming band,
And onward came ; and at the Chief's command,
Led to the centre of the guarded ring
A form of grizly strength, that seemed a king,
And one—

“ My father ? ” Julian cried, and fast
Forth sprang, and on that father's neck was cast.
With stern composure mailed, in governed mood,
Above his sobbing son the monarch stood.
Yet soon he looked half-round and down to trace,
Pressed on his shoulder, Julian's sorrowing face ;
To whisper :—“ Why, be up, be up, my boy ;
And stint these dark blasphemers of their joy.

Up, let me see thy face, O ! once again !
Boy of my heart ! Aye, aye, the rusty stain
Of dungeon cares on that young brow I see.
But look if mine has borne not grief for thee."
Awhile they stood with mutual gaze, till came
New filial fears and shook young Julian's frame.
" Why art thou here ? My father, do you know
The things prepared against you by that foe ?
Thou—speak to me, dark warrior on thy steed,
Say, can a noble soldier have decreed
That king like this should live with shackled arms ?
Why do but honour to the old alarms
Of mutual war, to him that aye was found
A noble foe, and let him stand unbound.
Men—are ye not ?—why lend me but a sword
One moment's space to cut these bonds abhorred."

" No change of bonds," Zemberbo cried, " he'll
find,
Till starker cordage of the grave shall bind

His head, his heart,—beyond the purple hour
When o'er an Arab's feet his blood he'll pour."

"By Heaven ! thou dardest not then," the youth
exclaimed,

"So give the old anointed to be shamed !
Am I not here ? In me thy victim see ;
If for our blood thy soul must thirsty be."

"Keep for thyself," the sable chief returned,
"Those boyish pleadings, in a moment spurned.
Years—wars—endurance, all, I've borne to nurse
Against one life the one inveterate curse.
There stands my kingly victim, in an hour
Of special cunning drawn within my power,
Thyself the bait ; for now be his the praise
To love thee more than love of thine repays.
Here boots it not to tell thee by what plan
For thee within my springes he was drawn :

Enough for thee to know, no wish of mine
E'er perished : Allah ! be the glory thine !
So learn, Sir Youth, to hold thee humble still,
Nor dare one moment thwart my conquering will."

"Anointed head ! my father ! and hast thou,"
The youth exclaimed, "for me thus deigned to
bow ?

Oh ! for the tyrant can his scheme complete,
Who talks thus wildly of my mother's feet !
Why, couldst thou guess that I indeed have seen,
And with my mother since last moon have been ?"

"Oh ! now—a father's shame !—'tis mine to
press
Thy heart, my child, for great forgiveness !
Yet her I loved : I only was not bold,
My love against a nation to uphold.
So was she lost : And, Oh ! a father's shame !
Scarce have I dared to tell you of her name.

Yet for her sake, methinks, my love for you
Has been, if possible, above your due.
Nor think, when thou with darkness didst consort,
And thy young feet were by the fetters hurt,
Aught, save my people's claim, could me have
 quelled,
And from thy freedom's ransom so withheld:
Then was it mine to fight against the foe,
And onward strive his kingdom to o'erthrow;
Onward to haste, to cut thy chains away,
That thou mightst leap into the light of day.
For thee I dared this snare, and have been ta'en,
To see—to bless—to have thee once again.
Yet deem not I regret: Wert thou the free,
How light were chains, how little death to me!
I know my doom, the tyrant has explained;
Yet trust I then his wrath shall be restrained,
Nor farther work against thy youth, but break
Thy galling fetters for thy mother's sake."

"Now is the crisis ! now the last dread hour,"
Zemberbo said, "to prove my sovereign power.
For this, Sir King, I've led thee forth to meet
Thy captive son, that thou with him may'st treat,
May'st change his faith, that him I here may make
A Moslem monarch, for his mother's sake.
Much has he dared against me ; yet I still
Beyond forgiveness shall those terms fulfil,
So thou his creed shalt change. Else have I sworn
A worse than doom of death shall pay his scorn."

"My son—my boy !" exclaimed the anguished
King,

"Those threats against thee sore my bosom wring !
For thee I nought can do, save here declare
Thy mother's virtues, that were high and rare ;
Whose creed and faith, if by those virtues shewn,
The loftiest natures might not blush to own.
Now this is all, my boy : thy noble pride
Must teach the rest. Oh ! thou must now decide !"

“ My father, and my king ! thy love to me
Is pure as Heaven ! is boundless as the sea !
O ! in those fettered days when I was told
Thou wouldst not buy me with some price of gold,
How did this heart, which never could maintain
A mid degree of gladness or of pain,
Which ne’er could hold itself indifferent,
Still to extremes by slightest causes bent,
Toil in its fierce and blood-consuming dream,
That thou hadst left me, and wouldst not redeem !
So did I wrong, in counting thus my ills,
Thy love for me, strong as the ancient hills.
So now I feel it all ; and in this hour
For all the past would I could speak with power !
Fain wouldst thou have me saved ; yet well I know
Thy soul would have me ne’er my faith forego.
Nor shall it be. Oh ! I have dared deny
My mother’s heart, and left her lone to die !
Say now—’tis come to this—we well are met,
Ere go we each to pay his bloody debt.”

With deep—with blind—with heaving sorrow
shook,

Yet sternly tasked to hold a governed look,
That father stood ; and tore his mailed breast
To win mere freedom for his heart oppressed.
Twice he essayed to speak, and twice he failed ;
But nature's silent compromise prevailed,
And oft the forehead of his boy he kissed,
Till words burst forth, and thus his Julian blessed :—
“ Young head sublime ! in glory o'er us all !
My first ! my best ! my blessing on thee fall !
For thou from earliest years hast virtue loved,
And been a child of honour unproved !
O ! Lilla Zara”——

“ Now, by her dread shame !”

Burst forth the Chief, “ thou shalt not name her
name !

Guards, blow your music to its fiercest bent :
Off—whirl this king to his appointed tent.”

**“ Now give me, son, the proud young martyr’s
kiss :**

Heed not those hints : thy faith must be my bliss.”

**Thus spoke a father’s deepest, truest love,
His child pursuing to the worlds above,
Which cares—which gives not up—which follows
on,
To have that child approved before the Throne.**

**With firm, heroic look, the princely youth
Impressed the solemn kiss, his pledge of truth.
Then burst loud storms of music ; and the King
Away was guarded from the warlike ring.**

END OF CANTO IV.

THE
CAPTIVE OF FEZ.
CANTO V.

THE
CAPTIVE OF FEZ.

CANTO V.

DAY came, and battle, which more fierce and near,
O'er Fez' high brim began to swell and peer ;
Yet well opposed, so bravely fought within
Hassan, the safety of his bride to win,
To thwart the foe, to guard his native town,
To save for Ismael his paternal crown.

Came Axuch in an interval of fight,
And claimed brief space to see the captive knight.

Before Zemberbo brought, who bade be told
His message, this he deigned not to unfold ;
But silent stood, till as the chieftain pressed,
Thus burst th' indignant burden of his breast :—
“ God ! shall the Liar glory in his lie ?
God ! must the Christian's hopes but live to die,
More brief than summer-flies, a filmy throng,
Born in the noon, and dead ere evening song ?
Arise ! ye glories of Crusaders bold !
Awake ! thou spirit of the days of old,
And fire earth's men to stand for Him, the Good,
Whose blessed thighs were nailed along the wood !
And shall they not ? Yea : yet the Christian sword
Shall clear from earth the Liar's swarthy horde.
From east to west, from south unto the north,
For Him—for Christ, shall many kings go forth,
Earth's princes all : most swift and pure to see,
Like eagles' faces shall their faces be,

Their hearts like harnessed chariots. Thou, at
length,

Son of the Highest ! rise, gird on thy strength !
King-queller ! City-queller ! Son of Heaven,
'Gainst the dark liars be thy chariot driven !
Go forth—go down upon thy foes, and break
The billow of thy wheels on Mahomet's neck !”

He ceased, nor more would speak till Julian stood
Before him, granted to his haughty mood.

“ So now, old slave,” Zemberbo mildly said,
“ Speak, for this honour to thy wisdom paid,
Unharm'd shalt go ; but say—we too must hear—
The message given thee for this captive's ear.”

To this old Axuch deigned not to reply,
Nor seem'd t'obey, nor seem'd he to deny ;
But stood as if no more to man he gave
Homage, himself so near the solemn grave.

" I come—I come," at length he slowly said,
To Julian turning, " from that royal maid.
She bids thee grieve not that she's lost to thee,
Since ne'er in life another's can she be ;
Since, even if faithful had her love remained,
But for a day a wife thou couldst have gained ;
Since in the poison's cold and mortal shade
Her heart is wrapped, and soon must darkly fade.
From pain she roused me, made me swear, she sent
The sick old slave, to give thee this content :
Nor slow was I for her my head to raise,
To do her errand in these faithless days,—
For her the daughter of my Christian queen ;
Yea, who to me has as a daughter been :
Young staff of reverence 'neath my weighed years!
Eyes to my dimness ! safety to my fears !"

" Haste," cried the youth, " tell her, my soul
maintains
A deathless love which triumphs o'er all chains.

God! must she lie where night's dull tree o'ercast
Harps to the wild and visionary blast?
With wintry nettlewands above her grave?
She—whom an angel might come down to save?
Such creature—Oh! must such in sorrow die,
Who makes her death sublime apology
For one mistake? who pleads a heart undone?
Beneath God's Heavens there's no such other one!
Haste, Axuch! in the wisdom of thy age,
Say aught for me that may her woes assuage."

Then spoke Zemberbo sternly:—"Ancient slave,
Why thou shalt go; but first a word we crave:
Declare our menace to your court renewed,
That still against us braves it unsubdued,—
Hence—from this hour—be vain resistance done,
Else shall they not the captor's vengeance shun;
Else—tell thy princess—deep in wasteful caves
Her royal charge shall pine in living graves."

o

“ Yet know thou this :—thy ministers of war
May bear them hence to lands forlorn and far ;
To northern regions where the cold winds blow,
And o’er the mountains drive the hail and snow ;
To sun-charred cliffs of southern deserts grim ;
To sandy lands of idleness ; caves dim ;
There still shall they be holy Christ’s not less,
There still shall be those royal children bless,
Shall train for thrones.

But what art thou the while ?

Ay, what, in great defiance of that smile ?
Ne’er from thy body shall the glory sprout
Of manly sons to fence thee round about,
But childless be thy loins. Or God shall give
An offspring, but for curse more positive :
Strange, shameless things shall be thy daughters
all ;

From honour downward fast thy sons shall fall,
Of marriage mock the chaste mysterious truth,
In harlots’ laps thaw down their shining youth,

Sow the lean desert with their thriftless blood,
Perish for tyrant's most capricious mood.
Then thou—thy heart forestalling Hell shall nurse,
And fast prepare for her unbounded curse.
Such peace be thine, so perish if thou dare
Destroy those children of my Christian care !
Yea more : yea this—'tis death !”

The noble slave
Has ceased—is fallen—is portion of the grave :
The old indignant heart has spent its force
In holy vehemence of preventive curse.

And o'er him bent the Chief, and saw him dead,
And gently deigned to shut each aged lid.
“ Old raven,” murmured he, “ 'twas slyly wrong
To strike thee down in middle of thy song !
But o'er this fate we'll blink thy last demerit,—
That grievous ballad of thy ancient spirit,
And give thee burial with all honours due
To one whose life was ever wise and true.

Guards take him hence."

They raised the stiffening frame,
And bore it off.

Then round Zemberbo came
At eve the captains of his war, and stood
Before his tent, and talked of siege and blood.
"Go, Mizri," first the master-chief ordained,
"Send to that court once more our terms sustained ;
So shall we mask our new-prepared alarms,
By shew of waiting for surrendered arms.
Go, Mizri." And he went.

"Aha ! yon moon,"
Still spoke Zemberbo, "Comes she then so soon ?
But lo ! this boasted vestal of the sky,
Why she is flushed and drunk to crimson dye,
As with wild sirups of the blood of hearts !
Welcome the fiery guidance she imparts !
On let us in the face of her red light
High hung, our battle-lantern of the night !

For, by the Emerald Head ! my scouts have told
Morocco's warlike banner is unrolled,
Flames in the western winds, comes on in haste ;
And morn may see it here, our hopes disgraced,
Retreat our only safety. Chiefs, away !
Maintain your squadrons in most prompt array."

II.

O ! that our fearless boyhood ne'er might cease !
Young Ismael lies upon his bed of peace,
By care unreach'd or sorrow : soft and deep
Is heard the measured breathing of his sleep,
Unbroken by the din that on the right,
And on the left, begins to shake the night.

But near his little bed, with faces pale,
His sisters silent to the tumult quail,
With startled glances and with shrinking forms,
At each new swelling of the battle-storms ;

Nor dare they speak, yet silence seem to fear,
And list as if some coming foot to hear.

Where is their guardian now? "Oh! where is
she?"

Burst forth at length, with shrieking agony,
The youngest sister, dark-eyed Orpa Zayde,
Till now a bold and fearless little maid.

Lo! to the question flushing, to their sight
Comes on like sainted vestal of the night,
With palm to palm, their guardian Geraldine;
And round her, lo! white wedding garments shine.
Pale was her brow, pale as the foam of seas,
Beneath the white wan moon, waked by the breeze.
In solemn peace she walked, till with a scream
She seemed to wake from some bewildered dream.
Then lightened o'er her face a strange dim smile,
And round she gazed, and waved her hands the
while.

Ungessed the mania of her poisoned heart,
Up her young sisters in their wonder start
And mingled terror, and around her wail,
And kiss her hands, and softly ask her ail.
“ What, my sweet Birds of Royalty, alarms ?”
Smiling she cried, and tossed her glistening arms,
“ Am I not come my wedding-robes to shew ?
In garments white, young brides in England go.
But then—but then, will Jesus think them fair ?
These at the Lamb’s great Supper do they wear ?
My head ! my head ! ye will not help me now !”
With shrieks she pressed, she clasped her bending
brow.
“ Where have I been ?” as if from slumber raised,
Again exclaimed she, and around her gazed.

She saw her little brother on his bed,
And to him ran, and murmured o’er his head,
Till, from their zones dissolved, the dark, the deep,
Her dropping tears bedewed his rosy sleep.

" Sweet knot of tangled dreams ! arise—arise,"
She murmured, " for thy mother's in the skies.
Wake, for the night of sorrow soon shall fly,
Wake, for thy great redemption draweth nigh.
And, sisters all, to her shall ye be given
Young white believers at the gates of Heaven."

Soft dropped her voice ; in some glad reverie,
With hands outspread, entranced she seemed to be.

Then came a slave, and took her by the hand
To lead her thence by Hassan's fond command,
Who, since the evening to the palace brought
Sore wounded, now his bride's last visit sought.
As urged the slave, she wept with fretful tears,
And sorrowed thus as from maternal fears :—
" See, see, they take me, will not let me stay !
But wait, nor fear ; I'll go not far away.
Where now is Axuch that he comes not back ?
Is he the faithless when my soul's in rack ?

For black Zemberbe comes : and he has sworn
That, flung to want, from me ye shall be torn,
Poor homeless things, to drink the desert rills,
To wander idly o'er the windy hills,
To eat cold roots behind the moonlit hedges,
To crawl for sleep beneath the drooping bridges !
But shall it be ? No : I have piled it well
Of sandrac-wood, the incorruptible !
Queens on the top we'll be, our boy a king :
No foe our youth shall to the spoiler fling :
For yet have I a faithful slave, and he,
If fail our last defence, shall ready be :
And that's my wedding-hour ! Now ye shall swear,
My little band, to dance around me there,
Like maids of England : Children, ere I go,
Have ye not sworn to me it shall be so ?"

" We have—we have," each wondering sister
cried,
To please their Geraldine, their fondest pride.

Then proudly waved she to the slave to go ;
And bade the couch of bleeding Hassan shew.

III.

There lay the warrior : Geraldine came near.
“ Oh ! royal maid, that we must loiter here,”
Half-raised, he cried with feverish energy,
“ In such a night—in such an hour, for thee !
Those wounds are dressed ; why can't I then up-
spring,
And cheer our fighters, and deliverance bring ?”
He strove to rise, but fainting nature failed ;
And back he lay with forehead deeply paled.

Then o'er him narrowly, as if to trace
His painful wounds, the princess bent her face ;
Dim wildered smiles and shuddering fears were
there,
Till fell the tear-drops of her pitying care.

**“ Oh ! thou art fallen,” she cried, “ the young, the
brave !**

**Thy bridal bed is now the hungry grave !
Darkness the childless now must be thy bride,
With worms of clay, for bride-maids by her side !
Joy ! thou no more shalt claim me from that place !
And here, for this, I’ll bless thy manly face :
And in thy wounds, if mine were healing tears,
O ! they should drop, young Hassan, long, long
years.”**

**“ By Heaven ! then,” said he, “ I have sought
thee now
For the fulfilment of thy marriage vow.”**

**“ Not yet—not yet—not yet,” she shuddering
cried,
“ Not now I promised to become thy bride :
It was not now—not this th’ appointed hour :
’Twas when the foe our walls should overpower,**

Or back be driven for aye. Perhaps that din
Proclaims the city ta'en, the foe within?
Why then, our palace near the central square
Shall brightly shine: next hour demand me—
there!

But ha! Sir Knight, thy knees are all too weak
To climb the crimson stairs, thy bride to seek!
But comes Zemberbo; then shall he behold
Our freedom won, O! boundless, uncontrolled.
And Julian comes, the wronged, the greatly
wronged,

A captive still—his painful days prolonged!—
To him shall I my broken troth confess;
And Death shall prove my wish to yield redress."

"I'll seek thee there: My end shall be delayed
With desperate check, till thou my wife be made.
Then let me die! But thou must be my own,
My beauteous bride, before my soul be flown!"

She stood, but heard him not; her listening ear
Was all-intent the waxing din to hear.
“ There now ! and I’m too late ! ” she shrieked and
fled.
And feebly back was thrown young Hassan’s head.

Long in a swooning dream he lay ; at length
Was waked his spirit, was aroused his strength.
Yet still he lay, his manly face compressed,
As if to win from his determined rest
One last great muster of his power. He rose,
The lattice sought, and heard his conquering foes ;
Those shouts so near ! those shriekings of affright !
And sound of steeds that galloped through the
night !

He saw, oft lifted up, night’s cloudy screen,
With sheeted blazes in reflection seen ;
Till, lighted round to one unbroken glare,
Wide o’er the city burned the midnight air.

As stood the youth aghast, a wildered throng
Before his eyes with shrieks were driven along,
With wild back-streaming looks, unmarried maids,
And mothers glaring through the umbered shades,
With clasping babes, and crooked forms of eld
That feebly plained, and by the younger held.
He saw a virgin from her kindred riven
By crowds disparting, widely from them driven.
Like one far drowning in a wasteful sea,
Still—still in death with them, the loved, to be,
She shrieked, she strove : They saw but could not
aid ;

And rushing crowds bore down the baffled maid.
To Hassan, ere she fell, one glimpse was shewn
Of lustrous beauty—trampled now and gone !
And fears came o'er him for his own young bride—
In such an hour what ills must her betide !
Though faint his life, the fever shall supply
A strength to see—to reach her ere she die.

For wine he called ; he drank fierce cordial power,
O'er death his spirit to maintain one hour :—
“ Then let it flag ! then let its strength depart,
Or join the fever to consume this heart !”

IV.

For now indeed, th' unmatched Zemberbo rode
O'er Fez, triumphant as a demi-god.
A grisly smile along his aspect gleamed.
Far o'er his head his sable ensign streamed.
Forth rushed his ruffian hordes : all kindred ties
Long distant wars had taught them to despise :
Even scorned the orders of their Chieftain feared—
To slay, to burn not—fire and blood were cheered
In dread profusion, and all deeds of shame
That link to Hell's renown man's boasted name.

Then to and fro Zemberbo spurred his horse,
Around restrictive orders to enforce.

He called—he named his old considerate guards,
Admonished—threatened—promised great re-
wards;

Bespoke each captain—bade him thorough ride
The city streets, and stay the lawless tide.

“ This midnight hour I have a deed to do,”
The Chieftain added, “ then I’ll haste with you,
This town to save, to clear the Fezzan throne ;
And with your help, brave men, I’ll sit thereon.”

Loud answering shouts the warrior-king con-
fessed ;
Then scoured away a band to do his hest.

He with a squadron to the central square
Triumphant rode, and wheeled his charger there,
And bade the captive Julian forth be led.
Apart was seen his father’s bare grey head.

Then round the square is drawn a mighty fence
Of guards, that redly to the night-fires glance.
And round before them on his snow-white steed
The master-spirit rode, with maddened speed,
As if to prove, nor pomp nor safety lacked
His dark and perilous fancies to enact.

Abruptly dashing, to the centre thrown,
Aloud he bade his trump of war be blown.
And straight with fleshy lips a giant form,
A hideous negro, blew the brazen storm :
From forth the huge black tube three blasts of
 might,
Each loud and louder, roared throughout the night.

Then bade the Chief his line an opening yield,
Where from the square a street ran far revealed.
And on his steed, with head erect and high,
Dilated nostril and a kindled eye,

P

He sate, far looked along that street, and round
Oft turned his ear to list some coming sound.
Hark ! is it not the roll of hollow wheels ?
Fierce struck the Chieftain with his armed heels
His bounding barb, yet firmly reined him in,
With desperate patience for that nearing din.
Now look ! now tell, what sable thing is yon
Which down the shadowed street comes rolling on ?
With night of nodding plumes o'ercanopied,
Drawn by black steeds,—a litter for the dead !
“ Allah ! my sister ! ” groaned the sable Chief,
And ground his teeth in nature's proud relief ;
Sprung from his steed, went, met the shadowy
frame,
Brief question asked, turned, onward with it came ;
Till near the captive monarch it was stayed,—
A litter low with linen pure o'erlaid :
And, oh ! there seemed a comely shape beneath,
Stretched in the still, unvexed repose of death.

"Come near me here—my father where art
thou?"

Young Julian cried, "I must be near thee now!
What means that sheeted form?" He fiercely tried
To clear his guards and reach his father's side;
But held—subdued, he stood with trembling awe,
To watch the process of vindictive law.

"Hear me this hour—see—judge me, chiefs!"
exclaimed

Zembarbo, turning to his warriors famed,
"I had a sister once: ye knew her shame,—
Her hateful marriage, her dishonoured name:
Stand forth who deemed my wrath was then un-
moved,

Or—is there such?—that I her love approved,
Or—where is he?—that vengeance I've forgot,—
See now my triumph of long-purposed thought:
Ne'er has it slept: my heart was only slow,
The more t' ensure a deep—this deepest blow."

He said, and, turning with a mighty stride,
Drove down into the captive monarch's side;
His steel vindictive ; from their snowy sheet,
Then bared his sister's fixed and bony feet,
And o'er them held the faint sustained king,
To rain his life's unsealed and purple spring.
" Ho ! double vengeance ! be the banner brought,
Last from him ta'en." And to Zemberbo's thought
In wrath refining, and his stern command,
The rustling flag was lowered to his hand :
With this her feet he wiped from each red stain ;
And o'er them drew the linen folds again.

Oh ! Julian, then !—A flash sprang o'er his eyes,
As high he saw that eager weapon rise ;
With short, quick cry he turned him as it fell,
And shrunk to hear it glut itself so well.
With panting breast, he saw the foe fulfil
The fearful process of his vengeful will ;

Till, by Zemberbo's grasp no more upstayed,
His bleeding father in the dust was laid.
One strong despairing wrench, one mighty bound
Has cleared young Julian from those guards
around :

He springs to reach—his father's hand to press—
To kneel—to whisper—and to fondly bless.

O ! still he lives ! O ! still that lightening eye
Can tell his peace to have his Julian nigh !
Then with his feeble hand he sought and found
The sooty beads which oozed from out his wound;
Life's last fine wine ; and with red finger now
He shapes the Cross on Julian's bending brow.

Now looks the youth upon his father dead,
Now slowly stoops and shuts each aged lid.
Then up with heaving bosom proud he stood,
And raised his forehead characterized with blood:—
“ Yes, thou the dead ! my dead ! fail shall not I
This symbol on my brow to justify.

Thy heart's last prayer shall surely not be vain—
So written here—my honour to maintain !
No power shall break my blood-baptized faith,—
Thy heart the font : I'll keep it to the death !

“ So let it help thy joy, thy self-respect,
Deep in a sunless dungeon of neglect !
Yet hear—despair ! thy harsh refusal gave
In one short month thy mother to the grave.
And is it not by Nature's laws decreed
That yet for her thy thoughts Remorse must feed,
To monstrous vulture that shall dig thy side,
Beyond the healing of thy martyr-pride ?
Bela, you know that mountain hold where I
Abode when hate against my life ran high ;
Where long I nursed my faithful and my bold
When worn with wars, surviving frail and old ?
There some remain ; and from you shall they take
This youth, and him a hopeless captive make.

Should he escape, each man of them shall die,
Driven down that Hell of roaring waters nigh.
Remove him : bind him on a fleet strong steed :
Down whirl him to th' embowelled halls decreed."
So bade the Chief; and grimly smiled to see
His victim startled by the new decree ;
For to a quick distressful cry of pain
Was Julian quelled, to hear of bonds again.

But soon he stood triumphant and austere,
And scorned the tyrant's doom, and scorned the
fear ;
Calm, clear his brow, like one, o'er passion's strife,
Who treads the borders of immortal life.

But hark ! how near ! that mandoline on high
With plaintive fret, as o'er the doom to sigh !
That strain once more ! 'tis she—'tis she ! Alone
To Geraldine that lovely song is known !

And o'er his father's now forgotten trust,
And o'er his mother's unremembered dust,
As longing men shall look for blessed Heaven
When flaming earth from 'neath their feet is driven,
For her the Captive looked.

He saw a fire

Up-bursting through a stately dome aspire.
And on its roof he saw !—he saw her stand !
He bade his God reach forth his awful hand,
And save her thence, and O ! those sisters young,
And Ismael, to their Geraldine that clung.
He saw, as curling rose the sheeted flame,
These children safety from their guardian claim,
And heard their shrieks ; yet turned she not to aid,
Or sooth, or heed them to the fires betrayed :
Wildly she looked around her from her height,
Still played her strain of love with touches light,
Still turned not, heeded not each clasping form,
That cowered beside her from the fiery storm.

Forth Julian sprung to help them—Held, subdued

By guards, whose office o'er him was renewed,
He called upon the Chief—reproached him—
prayed,

To send his men and give those children aid,
To bring them down. Ah! it is not for slaves
In such a cause to dare their fiery graves.

Give way—now succour! On that charger white,
'Tis Hassan's form that gallops to the light.
On through the square he thunders to the hall
Of fire, shall save them, or shall with them fall.
Flung from his steed, the fearful porch he dares.
Christ help him now to climb the burning stairs!

His steed let loose, and maddened by the light
And crashing rafters, swerves with reared affright
From side to side, and snuffs the ruddy air,
And snorts, and plunging gallops round the square.

Now seems the princess, on that roof of fear, ..
To heed her sisters, and their cries to hear,
Lo ! now, she speaks, she waves to them, like one
Some duty pressing which they seek to shun.
Behold !—is this their young obedience sweet ?—
They rise, join hands, they dance with twinkling feet ;
Their faces shine, their glossy ringlets stream,
Their garments white with ruddy shadows gleam,
As grows their whirling speed, as near—O ! there
The outward battlement they blindly dare !
On—o'er the edge, the lovely living wreath .
Hangs—falls—now broke and withered lies beneath !

With fearful shrieks the princess saw them fall,
Yet rushed not forward to o'erlook the wall ;
Dilating, panting, yet unmoved she stood,
Still softly faithful to that strain subdued,
Which first she learned from Julian as he sate
By twilight mourning o'er his captive fate,

Which now she plays, o'er madness, blood, and fire,
From love all-conquering till the heart expire.

For them—the fallen !—to look, young Ismael
came ;

But backward rushed encountered by the flame ;
Threw from his head the golden crown which there,
O'er perished hopes, seemed planted by Despair ;
Clung to his guardian, whom no ills could move
From mad adherence to her song of love ;
Entwined his little hands with clenched distress
Amidst the chords, his shrieking plea to press.
Still, still was love the victor testified :
That boy so dear—even him she pushed aside,
To clear the chords.

But now—'tis he—'tis he !
And Hassan bends before her on his knee ;
Uprises, tries to draw her from her place ;
But no—but no, she spurns the proffered grace,

Strives—shrieks—ha! plucks a poniard from his
sash,

The gleaming steel into his heart to dash!

Fell in a moment Hassan, starkly dead;
And frightened Ismael clasped his prostrate head.

With garments white now shaken in the wind
Of roaring flames, with tresses unconfined,
Dark and far-floating from her beauteous head,
Her glistening arms bedewed with life-blood red,
High towered the lovely homicide, and tossed
In wild repentance, or in wilder boast.

With horror struck—or was it might of love
Which owned her dearest still, all blame above?—
The captive loudly called upon her name,
And stretched his arms—O! it is not to blame!

She hears—she sees—she springs the youth to
reach—
Is lost—is down into the fiery breach.

And forth has Julian sprung a mighty space,
As if he hoped to meet her—to embrace :
Vain hope ! yet, dashed to earth, he gains the bliss
To faint away beyond an hour like this.

V.

He waked to feel the breath of cold grey morn,
To find himself upon a charger borne,
By thongs of leather to the saddle bound ;
A slave upheld him : others rode around.
Then o'er his memory rushed that midnight
back,—
The tyrant's menace—this appointed track.
And with a sudden wrench half round he turned,
And looked for Fes, which far and dimly burned.

Soon was it hid ; for fast his escort rode,
When life reviving and when strength he showed.
The mountain ways they take : Now high, now
low,

On cloudy summits and through valleys go ;
Aloft now hang o'er rocky steepes of death,
And see far dwarfed the caravan beneath,
Slow winding southward to the desert fairs,
Or yearly which to Timbuctoo repairs ;
Now, dashing down, they cross the fords,—again
On high to track the ways of mountain men,
Till, onward borne, and far with speed unslacked,
They reach at length a mighty cataract.

His winded horn the foremost horseman blew,
And thousand echoes from the mountains drew.
But hark ! again ! a trumpet's far shrill note,
As from the caverned hills in answer brought !
And soon came bursting through the cataract's flow
A skiff, light dancing on the pool below ;

Till, onward pushed by boatman old and rude,
It neared the margin where the party stood.
And to this grizzly Charon of the hill
The leading horseman told their Chieftain's will :
And from his steed the captive was unbound,
And quick embarked, with triple guard around,
With reeling gaze he saw the glorious sky—
Th' unbounded sun—the mountains green and high.
A flash ! the boat has burst the watery shock,
And onward shoots beneath the murky rock.
As half those waters to the valleys flow,
So backwards half beneath the hills they go.
Now o'er the sable billow, inwards rolled,
And down to wash embowelled rooms untold,
With pushing pole against the cavern's side,
The wary boatman shunned the stronger tide
Down diving on the left with sucking might,
And kept his safer ferry on the right.
A widening creek received him, as he steered
To flaring torchlight which from far appeared,

Forth o'er the stream by umbered creatures held,
Squatted and grinning with their looks of old,
High on a ledge of rocks which fenced the wave,
And seemed the threshold to some rifted cave.

Their ruddy lights far sleek the slippery tide,
Down on the left like serpent seen to glide,
Till, o'er the rocky jaws of darkness hurled,
It roars and riots to its nether world.

Red burn the nearer waters where the skiff
Fast dances onward to the lighted cliff.
And now secured by grappling chains it lies ;
And now the crew upon the margin rise.
Then inwards lighted from the roaring wave,
Far in the flint-ribbed hills they reached a cave,
Where burned a fire, and round it, bowed and low,
Old men sate nodding in the swarthy glow.
With grinning looks of deaf and curious age,
'Gan these to question of this pilgrimage.

**" We give you prisoner, from our mighty lord,
This youth, who ne'er to light shall be restored."
Thus spoke the foremost of Zemberbo's men,
Who brought young Julian to that savage den,
"Sun, moon, or star, he ne'er again must see :
Your inmost rocks his dwelling-place shall be.
Should he escape, each man of you shall die,
Hurled down that Hell of tumbling waters nigh."**

**With prompt obedience of malignant age,
Which hates the young that must its care engage,
Those seared and withered ruffians of old war,
The captive dragged into a cavern far.
And there must Julian pine through slow decay,
Or prematurely waste his heart away.**

THE END.

ERRATA.

Page 13, line 7, for *This* read *His*.

— 28, — 3, for *Now* read *How*.

— 128, — 8, for *with* read *for*.

— 143, — 6, for *thursts* read *thrusts*.

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